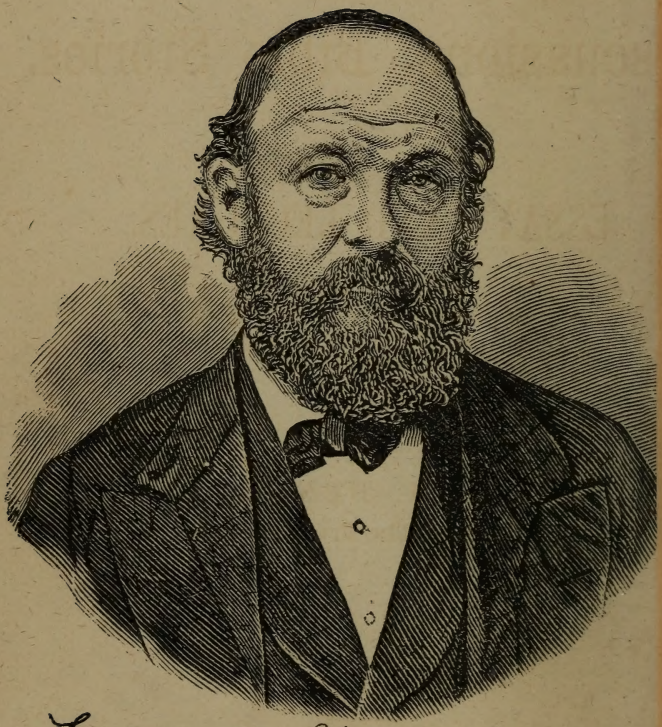
THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Fraternally Yours
D. M. Bennett

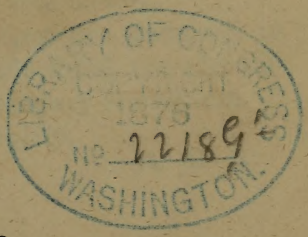
THIRTY

Discussions, Bible Stories,

ESSAYS AND LECTURES.

BY D. M. BENNETT.
Editor of The Truth Seeker.

17
1731a



NEW YORK:
D. M. BENNETT,
LIBERAL AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING HOUSE.
335 BROADWAY.
1876.

BL2775
.B37

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1876, by
D. M. BENNETT,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.
[All rights reserved.]

PREFACE.

In presenting the following pages, it is hardly necessary to inform the reader that no claim is made on our part to literary merit or culture. Our early opportunities in life—as well as later—would rather preclude this state of things. A common district school in the country, which we left at an early age, was our source of education, and a subsequent busy life devoted to active labor and toil has not been favorable for extensive reading and mental improvement.

The following articles were nearly all hurriedly written for the columns of THE TRUTH SEEKER mid the varied duties and anxieties inseparable from the publishing business, and often with deficient care and attention. Could they have been revised and rewritten, many improvements in style and language could have been made and some errors corrected; but this was deemed not advisable.

Repetitions in ideas and language will doubtless be be observed, which we trust will be attributed to the proper cause, and be kindly overlooked.

As they are, the following pages are presented to the reader, trusting he will understand the circumstances, and kindly make all necessary allowances.

Fraternally,

D. M. B.

NEW YORK, Jan. 1st, 1876.

CONTENTS.

1. Discussion on Prayer with two Clergymen.
2. The Story of Creation.
3. The Old Snake Story.
4. The Story of the Flood.
5. The Plagues of Egypt.
6. Korah, Datham and Abiram.
7. Balaam and his Ass.
8. Arraignment of Priestcraft.
9. Joshua Stopping the Sun and Moon.
10. Sampson and His Exploits.
11. The Great Wrestling Match.
12. Discussion with Elder Shelton.
13. Reply to Elder Shelton's Fourth Letter.
14. Discussion with George Snode.
15. Honest Questions and Honest Answers
16. The Gods of Superstition and the God of the Universe.
17. Moving the Ark.
18. Bennett's Prayer to the Devil.
19. Our Ecclesiastical Gentry.
20. Elijah the Tishbite.
21. Christianity a Borrowed System.
22. Elisha the Prophet.
23. Did Jesus Really Exist?
24. Jonah and the Big Fish.
25. An Open Letter to Jesus Christ.
26. The Ills we Endure, their Cause and Cure.
27. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
28. Daniel in the Lions' Den.
29. An Hour with the Devil.
30. Discussion with Erastus F. Brown.
31. The Fear of Death.

Discussion on Prayer, etc.,

BETWEEN

Rev. R. D. VAN DEURSON, Rev. WM. HOLT

AND

D. M. BENNETT.

The principal importance attached to this discussion, is probably the fact, that it was the cause of the inauguration of The Truth Seeker. The discussion took place at Paris Ill., in June and July 1873. It was conducted in the two weekly papers of the place. It was commenced in the *Gazette*, which was fair to both sides, while the *Beacon* was very partial to the Christian side, freely publishing the remarks of the Reverend gentleman, but refusing to give space to the rejoinders from the opposite side. This was of course unfair, and excited in the breast of one of the disputants, a determination to start a little paper of his own, in which he could say what he pleased, and print what he pleased. Hence The Truth Seeker.

The discussion was begun in consequence of a sermon preached in the Methodist Church of Paris by

Rev. J. R. Eades, in which, in true Christian style, he lauded the efficacy of Prayer in effecting the various conditions of life; the curing of diseases among the rest. This sermon brought out the following, by a young friend, Dr. P. S. Replogle, over the signature of "A Liberal Thinker."

To The Clergy.

REVEREND SIRS: We infer, from your numerous Biblical quotatations and statements made at the Methodist church last Sunday evening, that your conclusions are: *God hears and answers prayer;* and if he does not, then the Bible is false, your preaching is vain, and your temples of worship are worse than useless.

Now, we would suggest that you prove the efficacy of prayer by accepting the challenge of that philosopher, Prof. Tyndall, who, with many others, desires to test the efficacy of prayer, by having a hospital, or single ward of a hospital, which shall receive the special prayers of the Christian puhlic for not less than three years, and if it shall be found at the end of that time that the rates of mortality are less, and the average number of recoveries are greater than in hospitals or wards for which no special intercession has been made, the efficacy of prayer will be at least presumtively established.

Prof. Tyndall is a practical common-sense man who grasps intricate problems with grace and ease, and whose suggestions are worthy of consideration. He desires to test the efficacy of prayer by a practical de-

monstration in some hospital where those who are suffering from all the maladies flesh is heir to—from the colic to a settled case of consumption.

Two hospitals of the same character of disease are standing side by side. Let one throw "physic to the dogs," dispense with porous plasters, anodynes, cordials, blisters, bleeding, expectorants, etc., and rely on the efficacy of prayer. Let the other adopt the most skillful means of treatment of modern times, and by this means forever settle one of the most vexed questions that ever puzzled the minds of men.

God does, or does not, answer prayer. If he condescends to mitigate the sufferings of humanity, the hospitals where the poor are congregated, suffering from the excruciating pangs of disease, would be a suitable place for him to manifest his power.

By reading the Bible we find "Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech." (Gen. xx. 17.) "When Moses prayed unto the Lord the fire was quenched." (Numbers xi. 2.) "Peter cured the blind by prayer." (Acts 9th chapter,) and Proverbs (xv. 29) affirms that the "Lord heareth the prayer of the righteous." Also in St. Mark (xi. 24) we read, "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Now, then, if you have the blessed assurance that your prayers will be heard, why not accept the challenge, and, if you win, then away with Dr. Walker's Vinegar Bitters, Helmbold's Buchu, John Bull's Sarsaprilla, Old Mother Winslow's Soothing Syrup, and last, but not least, Dr. Green's All-sticking Balsam! Away with M.D.'s and their institutes of learning. Give room to the "man of prayer," for it is he who

hath the balm of Gilead and can heal our wounds. But if you do not succeed in relieving the suffering by prayer, then what? *Vice versa.* But hold, Reverend Sirs; before you proceed would it not be well to let the voice of reason whisper to you a moment, asking you to crack the following theological nut:

Does not the Being that made the world, govern it by laws that are inflexible, because they are the best?

If this being did change his established laws to please an individual, a community, the inhabitants of this world, or the countless millions of worlds, would he not be a changeable Being? And if he governs the world by special and local exercise of his almightiness, and has the power to effect all things, other than through the course of natural law, why does he not displace sin with good, slavery with justice, poverty with plenty? Why does the Deity permit famine, disease and woe?

But, on the other hand, if God does not govern the world by special and local exercise of his almightiness, but by laws which are eternal and unchangeable, what good will your prayers do?

Would it not be far better if you would learn what God's fixed laws are by studying physiology, philosophy, science, etc., and then teach your intelligent audiences what those laws are, admonishing them to obey those laws if they would be happy, either here or "over the shining river?"

A LIBERAL THINKER.

Reply of Rev. R. D. Van Deursen.

(*Pastor of the Presbyterian Church.*)

DEAR SIR: Your inference from our "Biblical quotations and statements" is a correct one—God does hear and answer prayer, and if not, then the Bible is false. And we infer from your Biblical quotations and statements that you believe that "the Being that made the world governs it by laws that are inflexible because they are the best;" "by laws that are eternal and unchangeable," and, therefore, you ask, "what good will your prayers do?" From this stand-point you suggest that we prove the efficacy of prayer by accepting the challenge of Prof. Tyndall, who desires, as you say, to test it by the separation of a hospital into wards which shall or shall not receive the special prayers of the Christian public, and thus presumptively establish the fact.

In reply to the suggestion, I will state that the challenge has been accepted, and the Christian world are prepared to furnish the facts. You supply the proof of the efficacy of prayer in your own article. You quote the solemn assertion of Moses that "Abraham prayed unto God and God healed Abimelech." Is Moses a trustworthy witness or not? Luke, a physician of some note in his day, says in writing the Acts of the Apostles that "Peter cured the blind by prayer." His testimony is surely as good and as worthy of credence as would be the sworn statement of "A Liberal Thinker" of our day to facts which he should witness in the Edgar County Almshouse if he should sign it and publish it in the *Gazette*. Moses and Luke tell us of facts, and we believe them. God answers the challenge before it was made. But you

suggest in spite of this that we prove it *to you.* If you will not believe Moses, nor Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Ezekiel, nor Isaiah, nor Luke, nor John, nor Paul, when they not only declare that God answers prayer, but give us facts in proof of it, we may infer that you would not be satisfied if your hospital suggestion would be carried out now in our county. Well, bring on your hospital; the first thing to be done is to get men to consent to lie down in that prayerless ward. When you have done that, then secure the pledge of the entire race that no petition shall go up to God for them (for the test will not be an honest one if, while we cease praying here in Edgar County, there are millions of Christians praying for *all* the sick,) and then at the end of three years gather in your certificates from all the world stating that no prayer has been offered during all that time by any individual for any in the prayerless ward, and then compare the facts, and if they are against us then we will agree to take down our churches and give up our praying. And if you say the thing is an impossibility, we ask why do you suggest that we do things which you know are impossibilities?

But you say if God heals the sick in answer to prayer then "throw physic to the dogs." Are you not willing that God shall answer prayer for the sick by intermediate use of means? No Christian man ever presumed to dictate to God how he should accomplish his purposes and answer his prayer, and therefore your logic is at fault if you argue that because God hears prayer we must "away with our M. D.'s and their institutes of learning." We do not neglect our plowing and cultivation of our wheat fields because we have been taught to pray for our

daily bread, but use the means and pray for God's blessing upon them.

Mr. Talmage says truly: "If God made us (and I think he did), and if the Bible is true (and I am rather disposed to think it is), then it is not strange that prayer does traverse natural cause, aye, that it introduces a new cause. When God made the law he did not make it so strong that he could not break it. If God made our bodies, when they are broken he is the one to mend them; and it is reasonable that we should call him in to do it. If my furnace in the cellar breaks down, there is no one so competent to repair it as the manufacturer. If the body is disordered, call in the maker of it. God did not make the law and then run away from it. What is a law of Nature? It is God's usual way of doing things. But he has said that if his children ask him to do a thing, and he can consistently do it, he will do it. Go on with your pills and plasters and nostrums and elixirs and your catholicon, but remember that the mightiest agent in your recovery is prayer."

But if you say this is all imagination, the Church rises with her millions of witnesses, and there are hundreds of them here in Edgar county, who will tell you they have tested the power of prayer in the sick-room and proved its efficacy. Bring our own Christian physicians to the witnsss-stand, and ask them if they can tell you of facts which prove it. The fact that such men as Tenbrook and Todd and Woolley, and Miller and Hays, are to-day members of the Christian Church, proves this, if nothing else, that they have tested prayer and believe in it. And if the testimony of Prof. Tyndall is so very valuable and desirable, is not the testimony of such men as Newton and Pascal

and Luther and Erasmus and Wesley and Knox and Calvin and Havelock and Washington and many of the most learned and gifted of the race worth something? You ask again "Why does the Deity permit famine, disease and woe?" I am not presumptious enough to say why God permits anything, except because it pleases him. But you inquire also: "Would it not be far better for us to learn what God's fixed laws are, by studying physiology, philosophy, science," etc. I answer that it is far better to study all of God's laws than to study a part, and, best of all, to study his moral laws which are given us in the Bible and admonish our hearers not only to obey physical law but moral law, if they would be happy here and "over the shining river;" for I beg you to notice that your law of present physical life, and your physiology and philosophy and science does not even so much as tell you there is anything "over the shining river." You get that from the Bible, which you do not profess to believe. Our Bible clearly reveals the life that is to come. Your science does not reveal anything beyond this life. We are not simply teachers of physiology, etc., but our mission is to preach the gospel which our Bibles contain, and its precious promises, both concerning the life that now is and that which is to come, and among them that blessed one which the Bible so clearly reveals, and that which the experience of every praying man has proved, "Ask and ye shall receive," and thousands like it, to lead the soul to pray to God, who is the hearer and answerer of prayer.

And I now suggest that you have the manliness to write hereafter over your own honest name, and do not sneak behind an anonymous signature. Gentle-

men who ask honest questions will always receive courteous treatment "from the clergy," and no sincere seeker after truth need be ashamed of himself or afraid to confess it. R. D. VAN DEURSEN.

Reply by D. B. Mortimer.

(*Otherwise D. M. Bennett, who preferred to use his middle name as a signature.*)

EDITOR GAZETTE: I have read the Rev. Mr. Van Deursen's article in your paper of the 21st, in reply to "A Liberal Thinker" of the 14th. The subject interests me considerably, and though I do not view it in the same light the Reverend gentleman does, I will venture to submit to you some of my views upon the subject, and if you deem them not intrusive and worthy a place in your columns, please insert.

It is not at all singular that our Reverend friend should maintain the great efficacy of prayer. Those whose occupation it is to pray for others, and whose livelihood is in good part secured thereby, very naturally insist upon the vital importance of prayer. Did you ever hear of a physician who makes his living by the practice of medicine, denouncing drugs and the use of them? Do you often hear practicing attorneys censuring the law and legal processes? Or, is it common for a life insurance agent to say a word against the policy and propriety of life insurance? "Every man to his trade;" and as praying is part of the business of the clergy, it is quite in order they should speak in the highest terms of it.

The reverend gentleman, however, does not go as

far as the Catholic clergy do; they not only maintain the efficacy of prayer, but also of holy water, blessed candles, beads, rosaries, penance, crosses, etc. A Catholic devotee will insist as strenuously upon the great virtues of holy water as Mr. Van Deursen does of prayer; but some of us fail to be convinced by either, and we see much of delusion in both.

The reverend gentleman perhaps uses as strong arguments as can be advanced in favor of the subject, but I am sorry he cannot find later authorities than Moses and Luke. They may have been very eminent and good men in their time, and possibly knew as much of the efficacy of prayer as is known now, but they lived so long ago, in the dim, dark ages of the past, that it seems like going a good way back for proof of a proposition which, if true, can be easily demonstrated by unmistakable authorities of our own time and knowledge.

If prayer is efficacious in changing the Ruler of the Universe, causing him to do what he otherwise would not do, I certainly think our Christian friends ought to be able to clearly prove it by persons now living among us, and whom we know to be truthful and trustworthy witnesses. If the matter cannot be established without going back from two to five thousand years and finding somebody who said somebody was sick—that somebody prayed and the sick were healed, would it not seem that prayer had, at all events, ceased to be of any practical benefit to us in these days, and has no efficacy to change the Eternal and Unchangeable?

The Rev. Mr. Van Deursen apparently accepts "A Liberal Thinker's" challenge as to trying the virtues of prayer in healing the sick, and says, "bring on

your hospital." But he makes the conditions so impracticable and so utterly unreasonable that the test could never be made. After a three years' trial "A Liberal Thinker" has to go to "all parts of the world" and take the affidavit of every individual that they had not at any time within the three years made a prayer general or special for the sick without excluding the prayerless ward in the hospital aforesaid. Before a thousandth part of the task could be accomplished, and with the aid of ten thousand men, not only Mr. Van Deursen and "A Liberal Thinker" would have passed over the "shining river," but hundreds of millions of others who are to be used at witnesses in the case. If one prayerful individual, Pagan, Mohammedan or Christian, living, for instance, in Australia, Patagonia or any other obscure corner of the earth, could be found who had, within the three years, made a prayer for the sick without excluding the particular ward in which the test was to be made, Mr. Van Deursen would doubtless claim that *that* prayer had "done the business," and caused the Ruler of heaven and earth to cure the sick of that particular ward, which otherwise he would not have done.

Now, if this test is ever to be made, would it not save a vast amount of time, labor and expense in going over the whole world to take the affidavit of every individual in it, for Mr. Van Deursen, or some of his brethren of the clergy, just to inform the Almighty that a test was to be made of the efficacy of prayer, in two wards of a certain hospital, one having the benefit of prayer, and the other not, and to request him not to interfere one way or the other in the latter-mentioned ward, and to take no notice for

three years of any prayer for the sick, either general or special, so far as that ward was concerned? It seems to me if this arrangement could be made, and the Lord was duly notified, requested and engaged, the business could be satisfactorily settled and the test made without all this travel, time, trouble and expense.

If prayer really has the efficacy that is claimed for it, it is of the highest importance that every inhabitant of the globe should duly understand it; and if our Christian friends are so positive of it, why are they not willing to make a fair and practical test which will forever place the subject beyond a doubt? If, on the other hand, their claims are untenable, and the Ruler of the Universe is not constantly changed by the millions of prayers being offered up to him by educated as well as ignorant, bigoted and short-sighted mortals in all parts of the world, it is very well also that we should be aware of that fact, as thereby a great amount of effort, time, talent and expense could be saved to be directed in some more useful, sensible and profitable channel.

Mr. Van Deursen names five of our prominent and worthy physicians who are members of churches and believers in prayer. His notice of them is doubtless intended to be complimentary, but he does not tell us when they dispense to their patients a dose of calomel or blue mass, whether they pray to God that it may act as a cathartic or alterative; nor when they administer ipecac, that it may nauseate; or quinine, that it may act as a tonic or stop the ague. He fails to notice Dr. Huston, Dr. Curl, Dr. Spangler, Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Baum or Dr. Knight; and I hope his silence in reference to them implies no

censure, for they are also worthy men, and many deem them equally as skilful as their orthodox, and possibly more prayerful brethren. If prayer is necessary to make physic work, would not Dr. Armstrong's little sugar pills require a greater effort in prayer to make them operate, than a full dose of calomel? Dr. Green, by the by, he should not have passed unnoticed. He is, I believe, also a praying physician; but it is questionable in which he has the most confidence—all-healing prayer or his "all-healing balsam."

Prayer, if you ever noticed it, Mr. Editor, is not, after all, of Christian origin or a Christian institution, but a practice borrowed from the pagans, and was in existence and taught thousands of years before the author of Christianity came into the world. The worshipers of Buddha, Brahma, Osiris, Fot, Yahoo, Thor, Odin, Jupiter, Allah and hundreds of other gods, prayed to their deities thousands of years ago, firmly believing the same were influenced, placated, moved and appeased by the prayers thus offered. Savages and barbarians of all grades pray. The worshipers of the sun offer to it their prayers and supplications, and fancy they are heard and answered. Those who bow down to crocodiles and snakes are profuse in their prayers. The worshipers of dumb idols of stone, wood and metal are very prayerful, and feel confident their gods both hear and answer their prayers. The devout Mohammedan prays regularly three times a day, always turning his face carefully toward Mecca, his holy city. Now if it can be correctly computed what all this ceaseless praying amounts to, would it not be interesting to all classes to know just the net result? If praying is a pleasure to the devotees of prayer, it is probably a harmless

amusement, but as for real utility in changing the Creator of heaven and earth in his plans and purposes, it will be found of no effect whatever.

I have lived to see nearly three-score years. The first half of my life I was a believer in prayer, and practiced it daily and devoutly. After many years, upon reviewing my life, I could not see that I had effected much by my prayers, and to this day I am unable to call to mind a single instance, where I have reason to believe that any one of the thousands of prayers I have offered, has had the slightest effect in changing Deity in his operations towards myself or any portion of the world's inhabitants. I presume, as my prayers were sincere and honest and persistent, that they possessed about the usual amount of efficacy, And I cannot see but what my life for the last twenty-five years, since I discontinued prayer, has been just as moral, exemplary and useful as before, when I prayed several times a day from year's end to year's end.

My opportunities for observation of my fellow men have been fair. I have, of course, in my time known very many praying men and many who were not; but I have failed to see very much difference in the two classes. I have not found that praying physicians were more successful in the treatment of the sick than those who relied solely upon science. I have failed to see that praying lawyers were any more sure to win their cases than those who neglected prayer. I have not seen that praying merchants sold any more goods or made better profits, or even were more to be trusted than those who did not pray. I have failed to see that praying farmers have better crops, more timely rains, more productive soil, or

finer cattle and hogs than those who did not pray at all. I therefore fail to see the advantage of so much time spent in prayer. My belief is that everything around us is governed by fixed and unchangeable laws, that cannot be set aside or changed by entreaty or supplication ; that every event that has ever transpired has had a natural and sufficient cause to produce it. As all results are the effects of causes, and as there are causes sufficient for all results, I cannot see the necessity of prayer to effect any changes or any results.

To my mind it would be perfectly useless for us to pray that every morning the sun may rise in the East and set in the evening in the West ; that summer may year after year succeed winter and winter summer ; that the laws of attraction and gravitation may not be suspended; that the atmosphere may continue to surround the earth ; that light and heat may be regularly dispensed to us by the fountain of light ; that twice two may always be four ; but it would be equally as sensible as the numberless prayers that are offered for all the blessings connected with our existence.

It is claimed there is a being who hears all prayer and answers such as he sees fit ; but if any one being is compelled to listen to the countless millions of prayers that are incessantly being made, would it not be enough to confuse and craze a mind far greater than a Michael or a Gabriel ? Would not a countless host of clerks be required to make a record of this continuous stream of prayer ?

Let me ask what kind of a Deity it would be, who every day, every hour, every minute—yes every second —changed his plans and purposes in keeping with this

constant outpouring of prayer, much of it ignorant, senseless, absurd, dictatorial and conflicting?

The Rev. Theodore Parker once said: "The only prayer that amounts to anything is *effort*," and I believe the position is a correct one. In this kind of prayer, *well directed*, let us all freely improve and aim to excel, and I believe it will be far more profitable and satisfactory than this constant begging, beseeching and supplicating the *Unseen and Unknown* which the clergy so persistently tell us is so pleasing to him and so necessary to ourselves.

The Rev. Mr. VanDeursen calls our attention to the fact that our ideas of a life beyond the grave are obtained from the Bible. I beg his pardon, but such is not the case. The much larger and older part of the Bible says little or nothing about a future existence, and all its promises, penalties and references are confined to this life only. The New Testament vaguely throws out some observations about the "New Jerusalem," the golden streets, the pearly gates, etc., but it was not written until long after the doctrine of a future life was taught and believed by many nations who were never Jews nor Christians.

Mr. Van Deursen also alludes to God as being the maker of our bodies. He is, probably, in the same sense as he is the maker of horses, dogs, fishes, worms and insects. I will not, however, enlarge upon this subject. I fear I have already been too prolix. I beg your pardon for trespassing so far upon your kindness.

D. B. MORTIMER.

Mr. Van Deursen declining to discuss the subject farther, the REV. WM. HOLT, of the Christian Church valorously came to the front as follows:

Efficacy of Prayer.

EDITOR *Beacon*:—I have read the articles which have appeared upon the above-named subject—one from Rev. Mr. Van Deursen, one from "A Liberal Thinker," and last, but not least, one from D. B. Mortimer, "A Liberal Thinker" also, no doubt.

I deem it not only "liberal thinking," but general looseness, the way those last named gentlemen handle the solemn ordinances of God's house, and what seems still worse for those "liberal thinkers," though claiming morality and common courtesy, is to hear them impeach the motives of those who regard prayer as a Christian duty and a great privilege. For D. B. M. does no less than this when he speaks of "those whose occupation is to pray for others." But he says, "the reverend gentleman [Van Duersen] does not go as far as the Catholic clergy do," etc. Of course not. The Bible does not *sanction* the conduct of the Catholic clergy.

But, Doctor, when you set aside the Bible as God's revealed will, and *assume* the ground of a mere Fatalist, by what authority do you find fault with us? We are just what the doctrine of Fatalism has made us, therefore, you should not scribble another line against us, or our long prayers.

We are much encouraged to know that even the skeptic concedes the fact that "Moses and St. Luke were *very eminent and good men* in their time, and possibly knew as much of the efficacy of prayer as is known now," etc.

We would be truly ungrateful, were we not to fee ourselves under some obligation to D. B. M. for this important concession. Important, because if they were "*eminent and good men*" they were not likely to be deceived, neither would they try to deceive others. Then, of course, they wrote the portions of the Bible attributed to them. St. Luke says that Moses was a prophet, and testified of a *coming* prophet—Christ—whom you should hear in all things, "and it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people," etc. See Acts iii, 22.

But D. B. M. says "they lived a long time ago, in the dim, dark ages of the past," etc. Doubtless it does seem dark to his vision. Why not? The past, present and future all seem dark to the skeptic.

D. B. M. informs us that he lived for many years a devout and prayerful life. But after reviewing his life, he could not *see* that he had effected much by his prayers, and to-day he is unable to call to mind a single instance in which his prayers had the slightest effect in changing the Deity, etc. This is truly remarkable. What sensible man ever thought of "changing the mind of God?" But he could not see that his prayers had effected anything! I do not wonder at the failure. You were walking "*by sight*," and at the same time could not see. But the Christian walks "by faith." See 2 Cor., v. 7. In this, Mr. Editor, we see the grand secret of their failure and skepticism.

This vast and boundless Universe, with everything of which we can conceive, had its origin in miracle; the predictions of the ancient prophets, the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles were confirmed by

miracles. Hence, says St. Paul: "God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will." Heb. ii, 4.

God did not have to change his will to work miracles, for the confirmation of truths or revelation, for Paul says it was according to his will. It was also his will that those miracles which were given for a special purpose should cease as soon as that purpose was accomplished. See 1 Cor., 13 Ch.

Therefore Prof. Tyndall's objections to the Bible, with all the little skeptics who are following in the wake, are based upon their ignorance of the Bible and its teachings.

But why pray, unless God will answer by signs from Heaven? Because God has commanded it. How can we know that our prayers are heard without a sign? I answer, first, know that you are a proper subject for prayer; second, how to pray, or what to pray for. When this rule is observed, how may I know that God hears my prayer? I answer, third, because he has promised to hear such. How, then, do I know that my prayers are answered? Fourth, by an implicit confidence in the goodness and promises of God. 1 John v, 14, 15.

But will I feel better after such prayer is offered? Yes, but your good feelings will arise from, and be the result of, your faith in the promises and goodness of God. and not your faith the result of your feeling, as is thought by many.

It is gratifying to many of us, who still hold to the good old way, if these liberal-minded gentlemen would inform us as to their faith. They, of course, do not believe in Christianity as taught by Christ and the

Apostles. It may be that they simply believe in all unbelief.

Do they believe in Spiritualism, Naturalism, Pantheism or Atheism ? Will they say which ? If not, there can be nothing learned from them.

We believe in Christ ; and when D. B. M. informs us of his failure to continue in the faith, he only confirms what the inspired Apostle said would come to pass, that "men would turn away from the truth and give head to seducing spirits," etc. 1 Tim., 4 Ch.

There is, in reality, Mr. Editor but one question to be answered in order to know where these very liberal-minded gentleman stand, viz : Is Christianity a divine institution ? Will they say yes, or will they continue in the dark, and thereby fulfill the words of Jesus ?

"Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." WM. HOLT.

Reply to Rev. Wm. Holt.

EDITOR *Gazette:* In the *Beacon and Blade*, of June 13th, I noticed the reply of Rev. Wm. Holt, to an article of mine on the efficacy of prayer, which appeared in your paper of June 4th, and, desiring to respond to it, and have it appear in the *Beacon*. I asked friend Moore if he would publish a rejoinder if I would write one. He said *yes*, but, upon handing it to him, it did not seem to comport with his views of fairness to let both sides to be heard in his paper, and he refused my article. Will you be kind enough to insert it in the *Gazette ?*

From the position occupied by the Reverend gentleman, I looked for some *argument,* and for some new light upon the subject, or some results he had himself accomplished in the line of prayer, but I fail to see anything of the kind. I cannot perceive that he controverts any position I took, or really adds anything to what has already been said. He quotes several passages of Scripture, which may be supposed to exhibit ability and research, and answer the purpose when arguments are not at hand. Some years ago, I knew a strolling, crazy woman (who, in early life, had been crossed in love) who, I think, could all day long, quote two passages of Scripture to the reverend gentleman's one, and with equal aptness and flippancy, to say the least. If any one offended her or opposed her, she would hurl at them such a perfect torrent of Scripture quotations, as would nearly make one's head swim. By the by, almost anything can be proved by detached passages from the Bible. There is hardly a crime, such as murder, robbery, rapine, theft, lying, and the whole category, but what can be justified by it, and as to matters of belief, are not all the possible shades of opinion and doctrine, upon the various theological subjects, however antagonistical and contradictory, positively proved by the Bible? It was said, many years ago, by a quaint individual, that "the Bible is like a fiddle—any tune can be played upon it you please."

The Rev. Mr. Holt seems to be shocked with the "general looseness with which I handle the ordinances of God's house," and speaks of the occupation of the clergy being in part to pray for others. "God's house," it strikes me, is rather an extensive institution, and there are a great number of us who claim

an interest in it equal to that of himself or any other individual. It is hardly to be presumed, he even, has any more right in this "house," than the humblest of us. He does not clearly state what he means by the "solemn ordinances," but probably prayer is one. I did not know but what it was perfectly legitimate and proper for any one to speak of it who choose to. As to the occupation of the clergy, is it not really as much an occupation as any business that is pursued for a livelihood? Do not young men prepare for it and engage in it as a means of securing their "bread and butter," as really as in the practice of law or medicine, or any other commercial or mechanical pursuit? Are not their services offered in the market to the highest bidders as really as those following other avocations? Is not preaching and praying really a trade as much as shoemaking or blacksmithing? For salaries running from $1,000 and $2,000 to $10,000 and $20,000 per year, it seems one could well afford to preach a good many sermons and make a great number of prayers, and get their living much easier at that, than is done at tilling the soil, shoeing horses or carrying brick and mortar. Does the gentleman say that it is not for money that he preaches and prays? If the pay was to be stopped, would not the preaching and praying stop also? And I submit it to him in all sincerity, that if that should be the case with him, would he not return to the honest business of following the plow, or some other means of making a living? It strikes me the world has had too many hundreds of thousands of priests of all classes and kinds, that we in this nineteenth century, should be afraid to speak of their occupation with the same freedom as that of other men.

I believe I have nearly the same respect for a good clergyman that I have for any other man; but for a mere pretender or hypocrite, or one guilty of immoral practices, I entertain no more respect than for any other men pursuing that kind of course. I have been acquainted with many clergymen in my time, who were in every way excellent and worthy gentlemen; but I regret we have so many painful evidences throughout the country, of "black sheep" among them.

To show my respect for worthy members of the clergy, as well as to further elucidate the subject of the efficacy of prayer, I will here quote what some of them have said upon the subject, and which appears to me to be reasonable and consistent. In a sermon on prayer by the Rev. William Leechman, D. D. Principal and Professor of Divinity in the college of Glasgow [strictly orthodox], the following passages occur: "It is urged, since God is infinite in goodness, he is always disposed to bestow on his creatures whatever is proper for them, and since he is infinite in wisdom, he will always choose the fittest time and the best manner of bestowing it. To what purpose then do we entreat him to do what he certainly will do, without any solicitation or importunity?" "It is not the design of prayer to give information to our Creator of things he was unacquainted with before; so neither is it the design of it to move his affections, as good speakers move the hearts of their hearers by the pathetic arts of oratory nor to raise his pity as beggars, by their importunities and tears, work upon the compassion of by-standers. God is not subject to the sudden passions and emotions we feel, nor to any change of his measures and conduct by their influence; he is not

wrought upon and changed by our prayers, for 'with him there is no variableness or shadow of turning.'"

Dr. Blair, a Scotch divine, also of an orthodox church, gave utterance to similar views in his sermon on the "Unchangeablenes of the Divine Nature," as follows: "To what purpose, it may be urged, is homage addressed to a Being whose purpose is unalterably fixed; to whom our righteousness extendeth not; whom by no arguments we can persuade, and by no supplication we can modify? The objection would have weight if, in our religious addresses, we design to work any alteration on God either by giving him information of what he did not know, or by exciting affections he did not possess; or by inducing him to change measures he had previously formed. But they are only crude and imperfect notions of religion which can suggest such ideas. The change which our devotions are intended to make is upon curselves AND NOT UPON THE ALMIGHTY."

The same views are inculcated by the philosopher, Dr. Kames, thus: "The Being that made the world governs it by the laws that are inflexible, because they are the best; and to imagine that he can be moved by prayers, oblations or sacrifices to vary his plan of government, is an impious thought—degrading the Deity to a level with ourselves."

These remarks strike me as being much sounder and more reasonable than Mr. Holt's talk about miracles, indicating that they are the result of prayer.

The reverend gentleman appears to derive a great amount of satisfaction from my remark that Moses and Luke *may* have been very eminent and good men in their time; but I fear I will have to lessen his pleasure, somewhat, by some modification I have to

make of that remark. Moses was, perhaps, eminent as a law-giver (such laws as they were), and eminent as a leader of a stubborn, war-like and rapacious people. He was eminent as a cruel tyrant, plunderer, robber and murderer, which is fully set forth in the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, wherein is narrated his sending out twelve thousand warriors of the Israelites to rob, despoil and put to death a neighboring nation—the Midianites—a quiet, peaceable people, devoted to the pursuits of agriculture and stock raising. It states that the five kings of Midian and all the men were put to death, and the women and children captured, together with 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beef cattle, 61,000 asses, with several hundred shekels of gold, besides jewels and other valuables. All these the despoilers took back with them to their camp, but Moses was very angry with the officers and captains of the host, and said: "Have you saved all the women alive?" "Kill every male among the little ones, and every woman that hath known man by lying with him; but all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep for yourselves."

Thirty-two thousand virgins, in pursuance to these orders of Moses, were kept and divided out *pro rata* among the different tribes, and for purposes easily understood. The others—women and children—probably, as many as fifty thousand helpless and defenceless beings, were inhumanly put to death. Was anything more monstrous, fiendish, cruel and bloodthirsty ever perpetrated by Nero, or Caligula, of Rome—by the Apaches of Arizona, or by Captain Jack and the Modocs of the Lava Beds? That Moses also committed murder in cold blood—see Exodus

ii. 13—when he killed an Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

We know nothing against Luke, and only, that two books in the New Testament are attributed to him, though he nowhere claims that he wrote them by inspiration. But at the Council of Catholic bishops, prelates and priests, held at Nice, some three hundred and twenty-five years after Christ, which decided by vote what books should, and what books should not be admitted into the collection of the writings of various persons, known and unknown, called the Bible. Luke's book was admitted by the merest squeeze, having a majority of a single vote. That was much closer than John Logan's majority in our late city election. Had Luke fallen short that one vote, Mr. Holt's reverence, as well as that of thousands of his Christian friends, for the saint's writings, would doubtless have been much less than now. What a difference one vote sometimes makes!

The reverend gentleman talks about us "small skeptics," "followers of Tyndall," etc. We are perhaps hardly worthy to be called followers of so able and learned a man, but we are small *enough*, doubtless. How is it with the clergy? Are any of them small in calibre and moral strength; or are they all great? How is it, Mr. Holt?

I do not precisely understand what the gentleman means when he speaks of my assuming the ground of a mere fatalist. I am no fatalist, nor do I believe in the government of fate as I understand the term; but in a system of unerring and unchangeable laws established by the Ruler of the Universe.

The gentleman's logic is rather amusing, thus: "If they (Moses and Luke) were eminent and good men,

they were not likely to be deceived, neither would they try to deceive others. Then, of course, they wrote the portions of the Bible attributed to them." Is not that a happy way of jumping at conclusions? Anything can be proved by such logic.

The gentleman asks for my views and belief. I would be happy to enlighten him, but I fear this article has already reached such limits as to preclude my doing so at much length at this time. Suffice it now to say that I am a lover of truth and an admirer of the beautiful. I believe in the existence of a Supreme Power, which exists in, and permeates not only this world, but the countless millions of other worlds with which space is filled; but I do not believe in the Jewish God, a fickle, changeable, cruel and malicious person, nor do I feel obligated to make the odious Jewish system of theology, mine. Whether Deity is an impersonal principle and power, which prevades the entire Universe alike, and is in the most distant star, a tnousand million times farther away than the sun, just as much as here, or whether he is a person, having a head, a face, body, arms and legs, with passions and impulses as we have, sitting upon a throne and occupying a single point in the heavens; or whether he is a monster with smoke issuing from his nostrils, fire and a two-edged sword from his mouth, flames from his eyes, horns from his hands, etc., as described in the Bible, it is probable Mr. Holt and I will never be able to positively establish.

I believe our duty in this life is confined principally to ourselves, and to our fellow-beings. God is so far beyond our knowledge and comprehension that we can neither injure him by our bad conduct nor benefit him by our adoration, prayer or advice; but we

can, by our actions, greatly injure or benefit ourselves and our fellow mortals. The greatest good we can accomplish while passing through life, I believe, is to do wrong to no man, and to do all in our power to make our fellow-creatures happy.

From the account we have of Jesus, I acknowledge to his being a good sort of personage, actuated by commendable motives and philanthropic intentions, though not possessd of such scientific knowledge as is now in the world, and embraced in the studies of geology, astronomy, chemistry, natural philosophy and other similar sciences; nor do I believe him to be the Creator and Ruler of the Universe.

I regard the hundreds of different forms of religions, with which the earth is filled, as all of human origin, most of them containing much that is good, as well as a great deal that is absurd and ridiculous. I regard Christianity as no exception to the rule, and that while it contains much that is commendable, it abounds in absurdities and errors, and is chiefly made up of dogmas, borrowed and adopted from pre-existent systems of theology.

While it may be claimed to contain more that is good than any previous system of religion, truth compels me to state that it also contains more that has proved harmful and injurious to the human race. More lives have been taken, more blood has been shed, more intolerance has been exercised in its name than in all the other systems of religion put together.

I would freely state my belief much further if it would gratify the gentleman, but it is not proper in this article to go at more length. Should he wish to discuss with me, in the public papers, either of the

points touched upon, or others arising out of them, I am at his service.

In the winding-up quotation of his article, the reverend gentleman has the courtesy to represent that my skepticism and unbelief, as well as that of others, arise from bad conduct, or, in other words, that we "choose darkness rather than light, because our deeds are evil." It may be entirely called for, and in good taste for the gentleman to make this insinuation, but it hardly appears so to me. I trust, however, my past and present life, for one, will compare not unfavorably with his. I take pleasure in assuring him I have endeavored to lead a useful life. I have intended to be guilty of as few wrongs as possible. I am glad I am able to say I have never murdered; I have never robbed; I have aimed to not bear false witness. I have associated with the upright and moral portions of society. I have not been a drunkard nor a debauchee. I have not been the companion of roughs and gamblers, and never whipped a defenseless woman with plow-lines.

Some other points of the gentleman's article I would like to notice, but I have doubtless already said enough. D. B. MORTIMER.

Rev. Wm. Holt's Reply.

EDITOR *Gazette*:—Your issue of July 2d contains another lengthy article from D. B. Mortimer—*falsely so called*—claiming to be a reply to my article copied from the *Beacon*, and doubtless our citizens will agree with me in saying that it is not a reply to anything

that I have said; but for absurdities, self-contradictions, harsh epithets aad personal insinuations, it is certainly a masterpiece, and the Doctor is welcome to all the notoriety and credit which can possibly be derived from such communications. This is just what we may expect from "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end," says St. Paul, "is destruction," (Phil. iii. 14.) What a pity it is that the Doctor could not control his bad temper and keep it from cropping out, but such is the weakness of humanity when uncontrolled by the Divine influence.

Only a few things need be said to bring this *ungodly* assault upon Christianity and its advocates to a close; and we wish the community to bear in mind the fact that this war was commenced by those scientific, liberal-minded and good-hearted (?) gentlemen, and simply because I volunteered to contribute my mite in defence of the Bible and humanity, and so successfully routed them from their hiding-place, exposing their glaring sophistry; pointing out the barrenness of the soil upon which they stand, I am made the object of their ill-temper and harsh epithets.

The community will understand all this. The opposers of the Bible are generally at peace among themselves, and had I let the Doctor alone in his burlesque upon prayer, doubtless I would have been one of the "*white sheep.*" But in this I seem to be unfortunate.

The mode of warfare adopted by the Doctor is never resorted to by controversialists when they have other material on hand; but when a man is completely vanquished, when his darling hobby is swept away, he must either surrender like a man or resort to personal abuse as he has done.

But I must *not retaliate.* Our Lord did not, "When reviled he reviled not again, when persecuted he threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously."

We would infer from the Doctor's reference to the "crazy woman" who quoted Scripture so fluently that my quotations had set *his* head swimming. In fact, I think that I can prove to the satisfaction of every one, from his own articles, that his head is just the opposite to what it was when he wrote his first article; that it has, to say the least, gone half way round. Hear him: "For many years I lived a devout and prayerful life, but after reviewing my past life I could not see that I had effected much by my prayers, and to-day I am unable to call to my mind a single instance in which my prayers had the *slightest effect in changing* the Deity."

Now cannot every one see from the above quotation that during the "many years" of his prayerful life that his only conception of the efficacy of prayer was that it *changed* the mind of God?

Hear one of the authors quoted and indorsed by the Doctor in his last article: "The *change* which our devotions are intended to make is upon ourselves and *not* upon the Almighty." *That sounds about right.* Where now are his Infidel objections to prayer? In view of *this radical change* in the Doctor's position, we should thank God and take courage; for it is clearly to be seen that his head is just right on this subject. We also trust the very remembrance of the "crazy woman" will be beneficial to the Doctor and all who have been influenced by him, and if we could only quote as many Scriptures as this "crazy woman" (for he says she could quote two passages to our one)

and thereby swim his heart around with his head, he would trouble the community no more with his Infidel views, and doubtless he would have better success in his devotions than he had while trying to "*change* the mind of God."

When the Doctor wrote his first essay, he implicated ALL the clergymen as standing in defense of prayer because it was an occupation—"they prayed for money!" but it seems NOW that he has respect for all except the "black sheep." Well, we are happy to report him convalescent upon this subject also; we hope that he may continue to improve. But he puts the following questions directly to me: "Does the gentleman say that it is not for money that he preaches and prays?" I SAY IT IS NOT! "If the pay was to be stopped, would not the preaching and praying stop also?" No SIR. I can say, without fear of successful contradiction, that I have preached and prayed without remuneration; can and will do so again if necessary. But all such insinuations against the motives of those who stand up in defense of the religion of Jesus Christ, are wicked in their very nature, and *this* may be the reason why the Doctor tried to hide behind a fictitious name until the editor of the *Beacon* raised the curtain.

The Doctor did say that "Moses and Saint Luke were very eminent and good men in their days," but now he says that "Moses was a cruel tyrant—a murderer—a robber, etc. But this he says is only his modification. If it is not a palpable contradiction of himself, I defy any man to make one. Now, if the Doctor will thus lampoon this ancient and faithful servant of God, whom Paul says "was faithful *as a servant*," what may Christians of to-day expect?

The gentleman assumes that the Midianites were an honest, inoffensive nation ; but if the reader will examine 25th chap. of Numbers, he will find that they had vexed and opposed the Israelites, and that God commanded Moses to slay them for their wickedness. Moses was a law-giver, chosen of God ; he lived and ruled under a dispensation of *temporal* rewards and punishments, and was simply executing the law against evil doers. The Doctor could, upon the same hypothesis, accuse George Washington, A. Lincoln and U. S. Grant, of murder. But this he would not do, therefore he should not abuse Moses.

But the Doctor says that "Jesus was a good man, actuated by the *best* of motives, but he did not understand the sciences," etc. Then he was not as wise as the Doctor; for he knows enough of the sciences to take him away from the religion of his fathers, and his otherwise prayerful life. That, to say the least, sounds like presumption. If Jesus was a good man he did not try to deceive the people ; and unless his immediate followers *were deceived*, Christianity is true, and this is all we want to know.

Three questions answered and the Christian religion is established, or proven to be divine:

1st. Was Jesus a good man and actuated by the best motives? This the Doctor answers himself in the affirmative.

2d. Were the apostles *honest men?* The second will be answered in the same way by all who will look for a moment at the sacrifices made and the hardships endured by them. Dishonest men do not sacrifice all worldly goods and even their own lives for what they *know* to be false. But the apostles did all this, therefore they were honest men.

3d. Were the things to which they testified plain and tangible? If so, the questions are all answered. Let us see. They were with him three and a half years, heard his teaching, witnessed his wonderful miracles, saw him arrested, saw him stripped of his own raiment, saw him fall under the cross which they compelled him to bear, saw him nailed to and hanging upon the cross, hear the rumbling of the rocks as they were being rent, felt the trembling of the earth under their feet, saw the sun hide his face and the consequent darkness which enshrouded the earth. Were these facts plain? Could they have been deceived in these things? Surely not. Then after he has risen from the dead they were equally plain. We would like to pursue this train of thought further but space forbids at present. We will continue in this faith until convinced of its fallacy.

In reply to the Doctor's last and lovely (?) paragraph, I will say that his insinuations are unjust and most of them untrue, but he tries to justify himself by my reference to the words of Jesus: "Men love darkness," etc. But Doctor, I did not apply this passage to you, only upon the condition that you remain in the dark, refuse to define your faith, etc.

It may be that if our lives (prior to my conversion to Christ) were compared, that the Doctor would be considered the better man of the two, from the fact that he informs us that the first half of his life was spent in a devout and prayerful manner. Mine was not. I frankly confess that I had sinned in many ways, and because the Lord in his great mercy saved me from those sins, I love him most dearly. But the difference seems to be about this: That while I was made to see and abhor sin, and by the help of God endeavored to

turn away from it, that about that time the Doctor turned away from the good old religion of our fathers and became a skeptic.

Again he says: "I have never murdered, I have never robbed, I have aimed to bear not false witness," etc. Will the gentleman say that Mr. Holt has committed either of these crimes? If he feels disposed, let him say that I have. I can also say that I was not the companion of drunkards to any great extent, but, like many other young men, I was for a few years occasionally tempted and drawn away. As it regards the gambling alluded to by the Doctor, I will say, for his edification, that the greater part of my gambling was done when but a boy at an occasional shooting match, and I was almost as successful with the rifle as I am now in opposing Infidelity.

As to your reference to the plow-lines, I will only say, ask those who know *all about* the circumstances. I refer the reader to Thomas Cox, ten miles east of this city; also Benj. Vanhauten, William Hodgens, Philo. Harkness, Jordan Noblet, Ira Poe, in fact *every substantial* citizen of that vicinity. All that was done, Doctor, was in defense of my aged mother, my wife and the peace of my own family. But I now fight with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and would not hurt a hair on any one's head under the sun. For honesty and truthfulness, even before my relationship with the church, I think that I would compare not unfavorably with the Doctor. The true man will confess his faults. I think I can say, and my brethren will bear me witness, that where I have been known longest, there I am loved most. This, Doctor, so far as we are concerned, *closes the war*.

WM. HOLT.

Bennett's Rejoinder.

EDITOR *Gazette:* I notice Mr. Holt is out again with another of his characteristic articles, in the last issue of your paper; also in some one or two thousand additional sheets, many of which he distributed himself. It strikes me he is using considerable ammunition for *small* game. (He counts me, I believe, with the "small skeptics.")

At the end he says, "*this closes the war.*" It is entirely with himself. He began it, so far as *we* are concerned, and now if he is ready to quit, I am content. As he opened the discussion, however, the *closing* belongs to me.

I can make but little of this last effort of the gentleman's. I find but little *argument* in it, but numerous misstatements, misrepresentations, misquotations and much of boastfulness. I will notice a few instances:

1. He says "the name Mortimer is false." This is untrue; it is my real name, and, consequently, not false. He says again, I tried to hide behind a "ficticious name," until his friend, the Editor of the *Beacon*, "raised the curtain" on me. By "raising the curtain," said Editor exposed his own misrepresentations and unfairness far more than any dishonesty of mine.

2. Twice Mr. Holt accuses me of "ill-temper," and without truth. I was not in ill temper at all, and was never in better humor in my life.

3. He accuses me of using "harsh epithets" toward him. Untrue again. I did nothing of the kind. I called him no hard name, and said nothing ungentlemanly.

4. He accuses me of using "personal abuse." I

deny it, and defy him to point out a word of personal abuse in my article.

5. He says I implicated *all* the clergy. This is false. I implicated none.

6. He speaks of my "burlesque on prayer." This is uncalled for. I have not burlesqued it, but endeavored to argue the question fairly.

7. He says I have contradicted myself. Wholly untrue, and his efforts to show it is mere sophistry and effrontery. Is it not to be regretted that a Divine should resort to such pitiful quibbles, dodges and subterfuges?

8. Not in a single instance where he has undertaken to quote me has he done so correctly. He says I *did* say Moses and Luke were very eminent and good men. I certainly *did not*, and I am surprised he should make such an assertion with my article before him. My words were, they *may* have been very eminent, etc. There is a wide difference, (if Mr. Holt ever noticed it) between asserting a matter *positively* and admitting *it may have been* so. The latter expression implies at least as much doubt as belief. Here one of his strongest "palpable contradictions" falls completely to the ground.

There are several other misquotations and misrepresentations, but I will let them pass, as well as his flings about my "ungodly assault," "wicked insinuations," "enemy of the cross," etc., as possessing very little force, and unworthy a reply. I will just ask the gentleman, however, if this is "the mode of warfare resorted to by controversalists when they have other material on hand?"

The gentleman asks if I wish to accuse him of murder, robbery and bearing false witness? By no

means. I never, for a moment, supposed him guilty of these crimes, and did not mean to insinuate that he was. I charged him with *no* crime nor misconduct. *His* insinuations were, that my belief arose from bad conduct, whereupon, in vindication of myself, I mentioned several crimes of which I had not been guilty. I did not say he had been guilty of either of them or any others, and, if not, I cannot see why he should be so much disturbed. I felt that his inuendoes and insinuations called for all I said, and it is hardly with good graee that he now turns and complains of my using insinuations. He was the first to resort to them; not me. I really know but little of the gentleman's life, past or present, and am glad to learn by his own statement, that it has been so blameless. I certainly have no desire to believe to the contrary, or to hunt up proof of improprieties upon his part. He says, also, where he is known the longest he is loved the best. That is truly a lovely state of things; but I believe if it was true of myself, I would prefer some other person to say it.

Some people are troubled with an excess of modesty, and are hardly disposed to claim all the merit they are really entitled to. Bro. Holt's infirmities do not lie in that direction. He is evidently one who is well pleased with himself, and has succeeded in convincing himself of his talents, if not others. Such expressions as "successfully routing" us, "sweeping away our darling hobby," "completely vanquishing us," "exposing our glaring sophistry," etc., seems to be in the gentleman's style, though he claims to be "controlled by Divine influence," while, as he asserts, I am not. Allow me to say these boastings remind me of similar expressions he used in his late debate with

Rev. Mr. Potter, a part of which I heard. His remarks were interspersed with expressions like these: "Ah! Bro. Potter, you are a beaten man." "You might as well surrender." "Bro. Potter, I have got you now." "You are my prisoner," etc. There *may* be argument in such talk as this, but if so I am unable to see it.

He tells us he was formerly "almost as successful with a rifle as he now is in opposing Infidelity." I wish he had told us just how expert he was with the rifle, and also how many Infidels he has completely used up. If he really is a "pretty good shot," I believe I would rather he would practice on me with the "sword of the spirit," which he says is the weapon he now "fights with," than with the rifle of steel and ball of lead.

His statement that he "has, and is willing to again preach and pray without remuneration," I shall take with a few grains of allowance. While he may have a fondness for the occupation, I shall expect him to keep an eye also upon the recompense. If he fails to find it in one location, I think he will see other "fields and pastures green." Now I do not, for a moment, object to a clergyman's being remunerated for his services by those who employ him, but in speaking of it as an occupation I have only classed it with others which are pursued as a means of livelihood.

With characteristic assurance, the gentleman claims he has completely demolished me in this discussion, and that he is triumphant. For a moment let us review the ground gone over, and see, if we can, *which* has gained the victory.

This discussion grew out of a sermon preached by Mr. Eades upon the efficacy of prayer, wherein the

usual Christian arguments were used, and the regular orthodox views maintained—that "the prayers of the just are heard and answered"—that "if we ask in faith we shall receive"—that as a result of prayer the blessings and favors of heaven are dispensed which otherwise would not be granted, etc. This sermon drew out a short article from a gentleman dissenting from these views, which was published in the *Gazette*. To this Mr. Van Deursen responded, further advocating the efficacy of prayer, and claiming also for it great value in healing the sick, which he endeavored to establish by reference to five of our orthodox physicians. This brought out a rejoinder from myself, taking the opposite ground. Mr. Van Deursen did not again respond, but Mr. Holt valiantly "came to the rescue," and though I have been unable to make out exactly what the gentleman was "driving at" I supposed he intended to occupy the same ground with the other reverend gentleman and maintain the efficacy of prayer. How stands the question now? The gentleman has completely abandoned the original position, and comes over to where I stand, and concedes all I claimed. He now admits that prayer has no effect to change the mind of God or his purposes in the government of mankind. He assents to the doctrines of the authorities I quoted, that prayer has no effect in changing the Almighty, but only *ourselves* and says in reference to the same, "*It sounds about right.*" Now this is just the ground I occupied in the first place and all I claimed upon the subject; and as the gentleman handsomely yields the point I submit it to all who have paid any attention to this discussion, on which banner victory has perched.

The next question is, will his brethren of the clergy

and his Christian friends generally, abide by the decision he has come to? Will they also admit that prayer cannot change the Almighty or change his dispensations to the human family, and for this purpose possesses no efficacy? If so, the argument is ended, and a long vexed question settled. If the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer is abandoned, so must also the belief in Special Providences. If one is given up, so must the other. They go together.

It seems, then, prayer is only a species of *self-culture*—its exercise bringing our minds into suitable conditions, etc. Now, I believe in self-culture; in forming good resolutions; in executing good deeds; in restraining improper impulses and all that; but I hold these *good* results can be better accomplished by a method of self-examination and self-control than by the indirect process of addressing prayers to an unseen and an unknown Being, upon whom it is impossible for us to produce any change.

Mr. Holt still sticks to Moses and brings Paul along to establish his good character. I fear, even with Paul's help, he will hardly succeed in making me believe Moses was an immaculate saint, or the "meekest man" that ever lived, as taught by our catechisms in the days of our childhood. The matter of the massacreing the whole nation of the Midianites—putting all the women and male children to death—and keeping the virgins for the use of the soldiers, he passes over as a small matter, and justifies it all by saying the Midianites had given provocation, and cites us to the 25th chapter of Numbers for an account of it. It seems the men of the Israelites were too familiar with the women of the Midianites, and that on one occasion one of the Israelites named Zimri,

brought with him into camp a Midianitish woman named Cozbi, and they sinned together, whereupon Phineas, the priest, arose, and with a javelin, run them both through the body. The crime of Zimri was certainty equal to that of the woman, and the punishment inflicted by the priest must be considered as summary at all events, and that with that, the matter should have ended. But no; this was the pretext for putting to death a whole nation of people, including women and children who were entirely innocent of this woman's conduct. If justice, human or divine, required the death of the whole nation of the Midianites for the offense of one woman, would not also the same justice require the death of all the Israelites for the offense of one man? The punishment was certainly terrible in proportion to the crime, and if one-tenth of the cases of adultery that have occurred since, had been punished with the same severity, the entire inhabitants of the globe had long since been exterminated.

Mr. Holt seems to think Moses no worse than Washington, Lincoln and Grant, who were also "engaged in the prosecution of war." How is it? Did they cruelly exterminate a whole nation for the offense of one individual? Did they put to death in cold blood scores of thousands of innocent women and suckling infants? Did they turn over at any one time 32,000 captured virgins for the use of their soldiers? I think not. They did nothing of the kind; and in all the annals of history, ancient or modern, it will be difficult to find a character blackened, bloodthirsty and cruel enough to do such deeds, except Moses.

The fact is, Moses was a barbarian. His people

were a wild, wandering and barbarous nation. The system of religion he established, consisting much in the slaying and burning of countless numbers of bullocks, rams and he-goats to appease and placate an angry Deity, was fit only for barbarians, and hardly for them.

My belief is that the Universal Father is as much the God of one nation as another—as much the father of the Midianites, Hittites and Jebusites as of the Israelites, and equally were they his creatures. To screen Moses from the just odium of his cruel, tyrannical and bloodthirsty conduct, by claiming that he acted by the immediate command of the Almighty, is making the matter still worse. I regard it as blasphemous in the extreme to charge such conduct upon the God of heaven—the Father alike of all nations and people—the beneficent and loving Ruler of the Universe. It is much easier for me to believe Moses acted from his own cruel impulses, and that in the account he wrote of it, he only *claimed* he acted by divine authority, than to believe for one moment that the loving father of all life would order thousands upon thousands of his helpless children to be massacred by others of his large family. When will divines discontinue charging such conduct upon the Almighty? When will they cease accusing him of being malicious, revengeful, fickle, morose, cruel and unjust? When they drop the barbarian Moses, with his odious system of theology and his improbable statements and claims, and preach God as he is—love, truth, kindness and mercy—always the same "without variableness or a shadow of turning."

The creeds of the churches, however, hang so directly upon Moses and his writings, that the clergy

must needs make him a saint of the "first-water"—a leader and a law-giver commissioned by heaven to do all the cruel, bloody and murderous deeds he committed. But the time, I think, is coming when Moses, his writings and actions will be regarded by enlightened humanity—divines as well as others—in their true character, and quite different from what has hitherto been held.

Mr. Holt propounds three questions, touching the goodness of Jesus and the honesty and sincerity of his disciples, and claims, if answered in the affirmative, the Christian religion will be established. I have not space here to enter fully into this subject. I am, however, perfectly willing to concede the honesty and sincerity of Jesus and his disciples. But that proves nothing. Sincerity is not a proof of truth. Numerous systems of religion have been founded, and all in more or less honesty and sincerity. The disciples of Mahomet were sincere. The followers of George Fox, Ann Lee and Joseph Smith were doubtless sincere. The mother who throws her little babe to the crocodiles in the Ganges, to appease and satisfy her God, is sincere—no higher proof of sincerity can be given. The infatuated devotee who throws himself under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, and is thereby crushed, is sincere. No one can question that. But all these are no proof of truth, but only lamentable evidences of the extent to which religious fanaticism and error will carry the human mind. O, for the prevalence of truth, light and knowledge throughout the broad earth, when all the dark and blinding effects of superstition, bigotry, priestcraft and error may be dispelled from the minds of men.

The religion of Jesus is plain and simple, but was so changed and manipulated by those styled "the Early Fathers" the popes and prelates of the Romish Church, many of whom were scheming and designing men—so many pagan notions and dogmas were engrafted into the creed with so much of pomp and display, until now, with all its gorgeous cathedrals, magnificent churches, towering spires, costly organs, crucifixes and paintings, its formal creeds—with its paid choirs—its salaried and often arrogant priesthood and with all its wealth, influence, power, pride, fashion, intolerance and exclusiveness, but little resemblance can be traced between it and the life and teachings of the lowly and wandering Jesus, without a home wherein to rest his weary body, or a place to lay his head.

I am well aware, however, I am not on the popular side of this question, and that I would secure a much greater degree of approval from the leaders and the masses by advocating views opposite to those I entertain. But I am not seeking popularity, nor do I expect to run for office. If I am only on the side of Truth and Right, I care for little else. My convictions are honest and decided, and I am disposed to express them with freedom. I have no desire, however, to shock or wound the feelings of any, and if I have said aught amiss I ask pardon.

At some future time I may enter more fully into the merits of the subjects here touched upon, but for the present this must suffice. Adieu.

D. B. MORTIMER,
otherwise
D. MORTIMER BENNETT.

The Story of Creation.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

If a critical examination is made in the account of creation given in the book of Genesis, it must strike the candid enquirer that there is great imperfection in the statements there given, and a great want of harmony between those statements and the truths of science taught by astronomy and geology.

Upon this Bible account of creation is based the fabric of the Jewish and the Christian Religions. It is recognized and endorsed by Moses and other writers of the Old Testament, and by Paul and other writers of the New Testament. Upon it is founded the entire theological system of the Christian world, and the plan of salvation of the human race.

If, then, the base of the structure is defective and false—if it is upon such a sandy or *miry* foundation that it cannot stand, the edifice must inevitably come to the ground.

God is not the author of falsehood. His works and utterances are replete with truth and perfection. If

God is the author of the Universe and all existences, he is also the author of the sciences, which are the most palpable truths known to the world, and have been the grandest and most unerring instructors with which mankind have been blessed. In fact, we hold that the sciences are among the most divine elements of which humanity has any knowledge or conception. In a word, THE TRUE GOD IS THE GOD OF SCIENCE.

If, then, God is the author of the Universe, and the author of science, and should vouchsafe to his creatures an account of the creation, that account must not only be replete with truth, but must also be in perfect unison with the science that he, himself, inaugurated. Whatever account cannot come up to this standard, must be set down as false, and not proceeding from God, directly, or indirectly.

How is it with the Bible account of the creation? Does it come up to this standard? We think not! it falls lamentably short in every particular.

It is claimed that this account was writen by Moses, who was inspired by God. We know not upon what authority this claim is set up. The story nowhere bears his imprint. He nowhere asserts he was the author of it. No writer of the Old Testament asserts it, and no writer of the New Testament asserts it, and if they did, it could be with no knowledge of its truthfulness, as they had no better means of knowing the author than we have.

It is not very material who the author was, but our entire ignorance only proves how unsafe it is to attach any special importance to it, or to yield our assent that it is an emanation from Deity.

It was, of course, written by *some* human being, and by one, too, who was not present when the events are

supposed to have occurred which he attempts to narrate; for no mortal was there, and not one was in existence.

The writer, then, must simply have drawn upon his imagination for the statements he makes, or merely repeated the legends and traditions handed down by his forefathers. God could not have dictated such a story, for it is untrue, and in direct contradiction to himself, as we have seen, and will further aim to show.

Science has taught us the truth of which every school boy is fully cognizant, that the earth is a sphere or globe, revolving in space once in every twenty-four hours upon its own axis, and around its center and parent, the sun, in three hundred and sixty-five days and six hours, thus causing day and night, and summer and winter.

Did the author of the book of Genesis understand these simple truths? Not at all. Could the author of that book have been God? By no means. It is now equally well known that this world that we inhabit, compared with other suns and worlds without number that revolve in space, is very small, and of an inferior character—a mere drop as compared with the ocean. It is known of these starry worlds that they belong in systems, and constellations that revolve and inter-revolve, coursing through the heavens, around some grand, far-distant centre, perpetually and forever, never for a moment remaining in a state of rest. Did the person who wrote the book of Genesis have the slightest conception of these things, and of the magnitude, number and immense distance of these glorious worlds on high, some visible but many more invisible to our

sight? Was he, in fact, competent to impart any true information concerning them? NO! NO!

It is well known by geologists and scientific men, that the earth, including the rocks and mineral ores, was once in a perfectly fused or molten state, and so must have continued for immense eras—probably millions of years, but in time, after the lapse of ages, the surface slowly cooled down and crusted over, the rocks becoming solid, and, by the action of water, the air and by other causes, slowly oxidized, triturated and pulverized until *soil* was produced.

That the earth is still in a state of great heat is abundantly proved by the internal fires which produce volcanoes—great numbers of which have existed and many of which still remain—as well as by the increased heat found as we descend towards the center of the earth; also by the existence of numerous hot springs in various parts of the world, where boiling water rushes out in great quantities, showing, conclusively, it comes from a heated locality. Did the author of Genesis know anything of all this?

As the account shows not the slightest trace of information of this kind, is it not puerile, and even blasphemous, to insist that God dictated this account, or that he had anything to do with it? If God is the author of Nature and all its laws, forces and conditions, would he not be likely to understand all about them, and being also the author of truth, would he authorize a statement wholly at variance with truth and science?

Sensible people must inevitably come to the conclusion that the Bible account of the creation is a mere tissue of blunders, errors and falsehoods; and is wholly unworthy the credence and veneration which

the ignorant and superstitious accord to it, and which is enjoined and enforced by a designing, interested class of men called priests, whose livelihood is secured by keeping the masses under their control, and by perpetuating the fallacies and absurdities of bygone ages.

The story presents inherent evidence that it was not the production of one person. There is not a unity of style, nor a unity of statement. The first chapter, and three verses of the second, are by one author, and the remainder by another. They do not agree, and they present discrepancies of so grave a character, that it seems most singular, how people of intelligence, in this nineteenth century, can look upon the narrative as the word of God, and think it should be accepted in preference to the teachings of science and truth.

The account, in all probability, is a legend handed down from ages long past, and from a nationality much more ancient than the Jews, and by the compilers of the Bible, made up of the writings of persons known and unknown, was incorporated into the collection and placed at the head; and the Christian world believing it to be a direct emanation from the Divine mind, for hundreds of years, have been regarding it with a blind veneration of which it is wholly unworthy.

As we observed, Genesis is the base upon which the whole Bible is founded. It is referred to repeatedly, and endorsed by subsequent writers and authorities throughout the book, including Moses, Jesus and Paul; so, if the foundation gives way, all that is built upon it will inevitably go with it. If the base is untrue, the entire structure is unworthy our confidence.

Let us briefly review the account of the "six days' work," in which it is said our world and all other worlds were made.

The first verse in the Book says: "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*" This is extremely vague, to say the least. When was the "beginning"? When did God begin? When did anything begin which has ever existed? According to the Bible, it was less than six thousand years ago—that in the same week in which he made the world, he made man. The age of this man (Adam) is given when he begat sons and daughters; their ages are given when they begat other sons and daughters, and so down, giving such data that we find the entire time since the beginning of the existence of the world, of the Universe of God, is less than six thousand years.

What person of intelligence can entertain such a proposition for a moment? What! the sun, moon, earth, and the countless worlds revolving in space less than six thousand years of age! Is God no older than that? Could he have been before "the beginning?" What are we to do with the assurances given us by geologists and scientific men, who have examined the great volume of Nature's revelations as exhibited in the strata of rocks and the various formations of which our earth is composed? They give us unimpeachable testimony that this earth of ours has existed many millions, and probably billions and trillions of years. To go no further back than the "fused state," when the earth for immense eras was in a molten condition, it required millions of years for it to cool down so that water could be condensed from a state of vapor, and remain in fluid form upon its

surface. Inconceivable ages were required for continents to emerge through the oceans of water that surrounded the earth, and for the surface of the rocks thrown up, to be converted by the action of the oxygen in the air, and the trituration of the waters, into soil; for exuberant vegetation to spring up and furnish the material for the immense deposits of coal now found in many parts of the globe; and also to use up and utilize the excessive quantities of carbon in the atmosphere, thus preparing the way for the possibility of animal existence on the earth.

Before this took place, the atmosphere surrounding the globe was so surcharged with carbonic acid gas, that no animal could breathe it and live. Upon these deposits of coal, we find numerous strata of rocks of varying thickness, amounting in some cases to hundreds of feet. It required great length of time—probably millions of years—for all these deposits to take place, for the lower orders of animal life to come into existence, one after another, before man appeared upon the earth; and the remains of human beings are found imbedded in some of the lower formations, where they must have laid for many thousands of years, and from periods much more remote than the Bible dates the creation of all things.

Owen says that the age of our planet, as indicated by geology, is "a period of time so vast that the mind, in the endeavor to realize it, is strained by an effort like that by which it strives to conceive the space dividing the solar system from the most distant nebulæ." Six thousand years, nor ten times that duration would, in his judgment, cover the period since the planet we occupy, existed.

Dr. Buckland says: "Many extensive plains form,

as it were, the great charnel-house of preceding generations, in which the petrified exuviæ of extinct races of animals and plants are piled into stupendous monuments of the operations of life and death, during almost immeasurable periods of time." According to his views, sixty centuries is but a very small portion of the time that has elapsed since the world began. He again says: "The truth is, that all observers, however various may be their speculations respecting the secondary causes by which geological phenomena gave been brought about, are now agreed in admitting the lapse of very long periods of time to have been an essential condition in the production of these phenomena."

Lyell, the distinguished geologist, thinks "myriads of ages" necessary for the production of the phenomena existing in the sub-strata of our globe.

Prof. Sedgwick says: "During the evolution of *countless succeeding ages* mechanical and chemical laws seem to have undergone no change; tribes of sentient beings were created and lived their time upon the earth."

Prof. Hitchcock says: "The globe must have existed during a period indefinitely long anterior to the creation of man. We are not aware that any practical and thorough geologist doubts this, whatever are his views in respect to revelation."

Prof. Denton says: "No geologist pretends to speak of less than *millions of years* for the time during which the various formations that constitute the crust of the earth were deposited."

Thus, it will be seen, we have a serious disagreement of authorities. Moses—or rather some unknown person, who is supposed to have written the book of

Genesis—asserts that it is less than six thousand years since the beginning of the existence of any portion of the Universe. Now, which shall we believe—those learned geologists who, by closely studying the unmistakable chirography of Nature's God read the ineffaceable truth that this earth on which we dwell has existed millions upon millions of years, or shall we take the mere legend, penned by an unlearned man in an ignorant age—an incongruous account, written by a person unknown to us, and though he did not claim to write by supernatural dictation, we are enjoined by an interested priesthood to unquestioningly believe to have been written, or at least dictated, by the Eternal Deity of the Universe?

With us there is no need for hesitation. We immensely prefer to take the real handwriting of the Eternal, as portrayed in the various strata of rocks forming the crust of our earth to the tale of any unknown individual, or to the legends handed down from any barbarous age.

Herschell, with his immense telescope, discovered nebulæ whose light, he calculated, must have traveled for nearly two millions of years, before it reached our planet. If it required that length of time for the light he saw to reach this earth, there can be no truth at all in the fable that the entire Universe was spoken into existence less than six thousand years ago.

We repeat; nothing is clearer to intelligent minds than the fact that what is styled the Bible account of creation, is totally unworthy of credit and belief, and that as it was written by a man totally ignorant of what are now known as the plainest and simplest facts of Nature, as the statements he made were in direct contradiction to the unerring truths which

science has brought to light, the claim of "divine dictation" which has been set up in reference to this legend or fable, must utterly fall to the ground. And as we remarked, the entire structure which rests upon this very insecure foundation must topple and fall with it.

According to this account, the first day's work was to make light, or rather to separate it from darkness, calling the light day and the darkness night. Light was undoubtedly of the greatest consequence before much else could be done, and it is a natural supposition that as the sun is the great source of light for this globe and this system, it necessarily would have been the first object to create, even before the earth. But the account says not. The earth was made, the waters were made, the firmament (if anybody can tell what that is) which divides the waters above it from the waters below it, was made, the earth was caused to bring forth grass and herbs, yielding seeds, and trees yielding fruits, before there was any sun. Reader, is it at all probable that this earth existed long enough for vegetation, including grass, shrubs and trees to grow and perfect fruits and seeds, before there was any sun in existence? Could there be any fruits, any trees or vegetation of any kind without the sun? Most assuredly not. Is it at all likely that the sun which is the centre of a large number of planets, satellites and asteroids which revolve around it and which is much larger and more important than all of them put together, was not in existence until the earth was old enough to bring forth vegetation, trees and fruits? We think not. The ablest astronomers hold the sun really to be the parent of the entire solar system, and that it absolutely

furnished the material of which the smaller bodies are composed. It must be admitted then, that it is a bungling, unreliable and most untruthful account which makes the sun younger than the earth and that says vegetation, seeds and fruit were produced without any sun.

Another very absurd feature in this account is the great disproportion between the different days' works. For instance one day's work consisted in saying, "Let there be light," and separating light from darkness and naming one, day, and the other, night. Another day was occupied in making a firmament to divide the waters above from those below. The third day was occupied in gathering the waters together and making the dry land appear, and in causing the growth of the vegetable kingdom.

The fifth day's work was the making of fishes and birds. The sixth consisted in creating the animal kingdom that lives upon the land, including man. But incalculably the greatest day's work was done on the fourth day when the sun, moon and stars were made. If it occupied the Lord five days to make this earth and what pertains to it, we can hardly conceive how he could do so much in one other day as would be necessary to make countless millions of other worlds. Jupiter, one of the planets in our system is fourteen hundred times as large as the earth, Saturn is more than a thousand times as large, while others of the planets are much larger than the earth. The sun is millions of times larger than the earth; and there are countless millions and trillions of other suns and worlds, vastly larger than the sun.

It is now believed by the most learned astronomers that what have been called fixed stars are suns, afford

ing light to other systems of planets like ours, which revolve around them—and that these stars or suns are not really *fixed*, but are themselves all revolving around a grand immense central sun, so far removed as to be indiscernable to us. The latest modern telescopes have brought to view immense numbers of these distant suns which were before totally unknown to the inhabitants of this globe.

We are again impelled to exclaim, what a difference in days' works! If it required Deity to employ himself five days to make this small world, it must necessarily have occupied him millions and billions of years to make and regulate the entire boundless Universe! How brief is the account of the making of these innumerable suns and worlds. It is all comprised in five words, "He made the stars also." How little the writer of the book of Genesis knew of the immense number, size and distance of these suns and revolving worlds, how little he knew of the size and distance of our own sun, how little he knew of the motions of the earth and other planets which revolve around the sun, as well as turning upon their own axis. How little he knew of any of the great truths which unerring science has brought to our knowledge.

It would seem no sensible person could believe an account showing so much ignorance—such a great want of knowledge was ever writen, or dictated by Deity who is believed to be the source of all truth and all knowledge. Why should we continue to call it a perfect, divine account when it is so clearly an imperfect human account? Why should we award it a divine origin, while it nowhere claims it for itself, and

nowhere shows it is in the slightest degree entitled to it ?

And this is the "great corner stone" upon which rests the fabric of the Jewish and the Christian systems of theology. What an imperfect foundation upon which to build an edifice. And this proving so faulty and imperfect how slight the opinion we must have of that which is builded upon it ! It is not strange that upon further examination we find the book full of faults and errors, and that the system of religion founded upon it is equally full of imperfections and falsities, nor can we wonder that the edifice builded upon such a foundation is already showing signs of decrepitude and decay, and is crumbling and falling to the ground.

While we have the account of the creation under consideration, we will call further attention to the work said to have been performed by the Creator on the "second day," to wit : the making of the firmament. Our object in dwelling on this subject is to show to the candid reader that the person who wrote the book of Genesis, knew very little of what he was writing about, and that he could not have been inspired by the architect of the Universe, who, it must be admitted must necessarily have accurate knowledge of what he created. The language is : "And God said 'let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters,' and God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament ; and it was so."

This account was written by one who believed that the ancient Hebrew idea of the firmament was the true one—that it was a vast transparent arch of solid material, placed at a limited distance above the earth,

which was capable of sustaining an immense volume of water, which, by this firmament, was held from pouring down on the earth and drowning everything terrestrial. In this firmament, it was thought that the stars—minute objects, compared with the sun and moon—were set, as diamonds and jewels are set in a ring. That above the firmament the throne of God was situated, and when he stamped his foot upon the firmament the whole heavens were shaken. That in this firmament were holes or windows which were opened more or less to let the waters through, which operation produced rain. When the flood was supposed to have taken place, these windows were opened widely that the waters might rush through rapidly and deluge the whole earth in the shortest space of time.

It was not known then, of course, that the earth was a sphere, and that this firmament, in order to "hold water," must, necessarily, entirely surround the earth, and sustain a vast body of that fluid, in comparison to which, the bulk of the earth would be an insignificant atom.

In the light of modern science, this idea of the firmament is extremely clumsy, absurd, and entirely devoid of truth. We now understand the process of evaporation of moisture from the surface of the earth ; it arises in the form of vapor and when it comes in contact with the colder air of the upper atmosphere it condenses, and in the form of rain and dew decends again to the earth, and this operation is repeated thousands upon thousands of times. Nothing can appear more ridiculous and false than the idea that rain is produced by the water above the firmament trickling through "gimlet holes" in that imaginary something, or regulated, perhaps, by

stop-cocks, faucets or valves, the same being open and shut by the "weather clerk" up stairs. By this theory no provision was made for the water upon the surface of the earth to ascend and get above the firmament again, and as a consequence, the water by the repeated addition of rains, must constantly increase until in time the whole earth would be covered without any chance of drainage or escape.

If we lay aside the superstition adhering to ancient traditions and legends we must inevitably see that this entire account of the firmament, which the story says God busied himself a day in making, and in which he set the sun, the moon, and the countless millions of stars, which as we have seen, are themselves suns and centers of numberless other systems, is in every particular false, and worthy only of an ignorant, barbarrous age, before science had taught the world the simplest truths of nature.

We object not to the story as a legend of olden time. In that view we willingly accord it all the veneration due it, the same as we would to any similar fable of ancient times, but when we are required to accept it as the word of God, or a revelation from Deity—together with the thousands of other absurdities and falsehoods with which the book abounds—we most respecfully and decidedly object. We cannot possibly throw away reason, science and common sense, and substitute in their place such a tissue of clumsy absurdities and impossibilities, as priests and bible devotees demand of us.

It is indeed most singular how people of average intelligence can so easily believe the idle fables, and groundless stories which have been handed down from the dark ages of the past, when there is no proof

to sustain them, and not the slightest possibility of their being true. Why should men take unquestioned, as the infallible dicta of the Almighty, that which is only the imperfect and untrue narrative of an unknown man belonging to an age of great ignorance in the long ago? Why should they discard and set aside the unerring teachings of science as unworthy of confidence and belief, and hug to their bosoms the shadows, the fallacies, the absurdities and chimeras of an age of darkness, superstition and error?

Why, we repeat, should it be believed that Moses was the author of the book of Genesis, when it is no where asserted that such is the case, neither in that book nor any other in the Bible that succeeds it —while he neither asserts it himself, nor any other bible writer asserts it for him, and while it narrates events that occurred at least two hundred and fifty years after his death? Is it simply because some Jewish priest or some Romish priest assumed it was the case, and so asserting, we feel bound to accede to it and believe it?

It matters very little to us whether the book was written by Moses or some other person, but this much we cannot fail to understand, that it could not possibly have been dictated by Deity, for it contains errors and absurdities too gross for him to be the author of. God we must believe to be the source and origin of truth, and that from him error and falsehood cannot emanate.

Why does the Christian world adhere so tenaciously to the belief that the Bible is the word of God? Is it because it is older than all other books, or that it is purer, better or more moral? Is it because the wriers of it are better known than those of other books,

or that the nations which have acknowledged it as divine have been more peaceful, inoffensive and heavenly than other nations of the earth? No, it is for none of these reasons.

The Bible is not so old as the Pymander of Egypt, the Shaster of Persia, the sacred writings of the "Celestial Empire," and the Vedas of India. It contains no better morals than those works—no higher proofs of divinity; but on the other hand, more that is obscene, vulgar, and immoral—more that is bloodthirsty, cruel and warlike, than either of the books mentioned. Its writers are no better known, and its truths no better authenticated. The nations which have claimed it as the Word of God, have been as distinguished for wars, bloodshed, brigandage and robbery; have been as deficient in the high qualities called "virtues," as any nations in the world's history.

It is held to be the "Word of God" because Jewish, Romish and Protestant priests have so taught the people. They have made it an engine of power and rule over the masses, and with which to compel the payment of tithes and exactions for their own benefit. It has, for centuries, been held as a terror over the trembling, ignorant souls, who have not had the freedom and independence to think and judge for themselves.

But the world is progressing, priestcraft is gradually losing its power, and with the advance of science, reason and truth, blind faith in a written and printed "Word of God" will pass away, and men will look for truth and knowledge to the unerring and changeless volume of Nature, which requires neither priests nor translators to explain and expound, and which

can be equally understood by all tongues and peoples.

As mankind become enlightened as to the true Deity which exists in Nature and Science, the more they study the great and true volume which that Deity has spread out for all to examine and admire, the less they will be led and controlled by priests; and the veneration they have long entertained for the myths and the superstitions of the past, will gradually fade away.

We call attention for a few moments to the account in Genesis of the creation of man, to see if we can find it to be a reasonable, truthful account. It seems this creation was a part of the sixth or last day's work. As every living creature of the earth, cattle, creeping things and beasts, were made in the fore part of this day, before man was undertaken, we may well suppose it got to be along well towards evening before God said, "*Let us make man.*" There seems to be a slight discrepancy in the narrative. The first chapter with the first three verses of the second chapter, purport to give a comprehensive account of the creation of the entire Universe; the suns, starry orbs, the earth, including vegetation, animals and man. In the 27th verse it says, *God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* We are left to suppose by this, that man and woman were created at the same time and in the same manner, the original plan being to have male and female of the human species the same as in all other varities of animal life. We are not told here of what material God formed man and woman: but in the next chapter, which is evidently the prodnction of another individual, we have a very different account. There we are told "*The Lord God*

(in the first chapter it had been God only) *formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

As man has lungs similar to other animals, and breathes the same air, it is natural to suppose his breathing apparatus was gotten up in a similar way to theirs; but according to this account, the process was different, for we are told nothing about the Lord God breathing into the nostrils of horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, dogs, cats, toads, frogs, snakes, and the entire list of animated life; and notwithstanding this, they have continued to breathe from that day to this and just as efficiently as the human race.

By the second chapter it seems God originally designed man to be of the masculine gender only, for that is the way he made him; and he remained this way for some time, long enough, at least, for God to plant a garden in the Eastern part of Eden, and cause trees and plants to grow bearing fruit to eat and to look upon, after which the Lord God placed man in this garden to dress and keep it. Then, it seems, *the Lord God formed out of the ground every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.* According to this story in the second chapter, Adam was made before any of the beasts of the field or fowls of the air, for we have just seen the Lord God formed them out of the ground and brought them to Adam as he made them, to be named. According to the first chapter, these were all made before Adam was commenced, and he was the last work performed on the last day. *Query:* Which account is the real word of God? And if he wrote

both accounts how came he to write them so differently?

Well, after all these animals and birds were made male and female, and plants and trees were made, (possessing also the male and female elements) it seems to have been discovered that Adam had no mate and that it was not good for him to be alone; and as a sort of after-thought, the Lord God concluded to make a woman that Adam might have company.

The account says Adam was formed of the dust of the ground. This material was doubtless as plenty and as handy as anything, but we submit it, that the account is not true. While human bodies possess a certain portion of earthy matter, it really forms but a small percentage of their organization. Man is composed of many primitive elements known in chemistry, among which may be named oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, lime and several other elements in smaller proportion, most of which are not earth at all, nor usually found in the form of "dust." The proportion of absolute earth in the human body is but a few ounces, and amounts to less than two per cent. of the whole matter. The great bulk is made of the gases just named, in a combined state; but when this account was written nothing was known about oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nor any of the elements the science of chemistry has brought to light, and if God did not understand anything about this, or the science of chemistry, we ought not, perhaps, be too critical about it.

When, however, it was thus discovered that it was not good for Adam to be alone and it was decided to create a woman for him, though there was doubtless plenty of the material left of which Adam was com-

posed, the Lord God saw fit to take another material and another process. He put Adam into a deep sleep, whether by ether, chloroform, or opium, we are not told, when he performed a very difficult surgical operation and took out one of his ribs, without doing the man the slightest injury, and of this rib he formed a woman.

Wishing, of course, to treat this subject with all due reverence and seriousnees, we are nevertheless constrained to remark that it seems to us that a rib bone would not be first-rate material out of which to form a woman. How the rosy cheeks, the brilliant eyes, the glossy hair, the rounded, symmetrical limbs, the swelling, palpitating bosom, together with all the "little variations" and et ceteras of which a certain good deacon had so high an appreciation, could be modulated from a piece of dry bone, weighing three or four ounces, has always been a mystery to us. Bone is composed principally of lime, with some carbon and a small percentage of phosphorous. From these materials how could it be possible to convert all the hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, etc., etc., which necessarily enter into the body of a woman, say, one hundred and twenty-five pounds, the writers of the book of Genesis have given us no clue. Woman's body contains very many elements non-existent in rib-bones and let us ask right here, if this story of the formation of Eve is truth, where did they come from?

If God found it necessary in order to obtain a female of the human species, to cut man open and take out one of his ribs, why did he not, in order to obtain females of all the many species of animated life have to pursue the same course? If a rib-bone was the proper thing out of which to formulate a woman,

why did he not also use rib-bones from which to form cows, ewes, does, mares, jennies, sows, sluts, tigresses, lionesses, she-bears, female camels, elephants, rhinoceroses, etc., etc.? If a rib-bone is the natural and necessary source of femininity, could the rule be departed from in any case? Is it at all probable the female element exists more especially in a rib-bone than in other forms of matter? Does not the whole Universe possess the quality of femininity to as great an extent as masculinity, and is not one just as old as the other? Are not both principles as old as the Universe itself, which is without beginning or end?

In view of the utter absurdity of the Bible story of creation, having all been accomplished in the space of six days, or one hundred and forty-four hours, the apologists in modern times have attempted to evade the absurdity of the legend by setting up the claim that the word "day" does not mean a day of twenty-four hours, but an indefinite epoch, period or age in which certain progressions of the Universe successively passed. This is done for the purpose of making the Bible harmonize with positive truths of advancing science. The great Scotch geologist, Hugh Miller, who, though decidedly a scientific man, still indulged a great veneration for the old superstitions, bent his energies in this special direction; but he was not successful. There were such discrepancies between legend and science, that he was unable to reconcile them, and the troubled state of mind which finally drove the poor man to suicide, doubtless had a close connection with this perplexing inexplicability.

Were it possible that a day meant an incalculable number of years, it would follow that the seventh day is still in its early hours, as six thousand years is

known to be but a small fraction of the time that must have constituted one of the days of creation. And the difficulty does not end here; the order of the Bible accounts, as regards the precedence which certain forms of life have over others, is in positive contradiction to the truths which science has revealed. For instance, the Bible says of the work of the fifth day, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that have life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." Of the work of the sixth day, it says: "Let the earth bring forth the living creatures after his kind. cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after his kind." Thus, according to this pseudo-divine account, birds and fowls of the air were brought into existence before reptiles, and the crawling and creeping things of the earth. Nothing could be further from the truth. Science has positively established the fact that reptiles, including snakes, lizards. toads, worms and the numerous creeping and crawling things, existed immense eras before the feathered tribe. This is definitely established beyond all controversy, by the fossils that are found in the early formations. No true scientist now harbors a doubt that the reptiles inhabited the earth thousands of years before the advent of fowls and birds, and these were thousands of years later succeeded by mammals and quadrupeds.

It has doubtless been suspected by some of our readers that we are slightly skeptical on some points. Well we are; and we cannot help it. We cannot believe this Bible tale, nor do we want to. It exhibits too much ignorance, contradiction and absurdity to convince us that it is a revelation from the God of

the Universe, and was given for the enlightenment of thinking, rational beings. It is vastly easier for us to think there has been some mistake about this being the "word of God"; that it was written by some person or persons who were not gods, but merely men, and with very rude and limited information at that.

For our use, the investigations and researches of Professors Lyell, Hitchcock, Dana, Denton and other eminent geologists, relative to the great age and antiquity of the earth—the philosophies and discoveries of Darwin, Spencer and other scientists, as to the origin, development and evolution of the different forms of animal and human life are so much more rational, scientific, sensible and truthful than this clumsy, slip-shod, irregular, impossible Bible story, that we greatly prefer them. They convince our reason of their superiority and truthfulness, and we are bound to accept their teachings.

Christians tells us this Bible narrative of the creation, on which their system of religion is founded is positively and absolutely the word of God and that if we do not believe it we must burn in hell forever, though they present us not the slightest proof either positive or circumstantial that this story was written by God or that he had anything to do with it. If we have to burn for not believing it, why, *burn* it is; for believe it we cannot.

We doubt, however, their tales and threats about the burning, as much as we do the story itself. We cannot think God will ever doom a being to eternal torment for not believing that which it is impossible for him to believe. It is our opinion also, that those Christians know as much as to what God will do in the future, as they know as to what he has done in the past, and that is just nothing at all.

THE SNAKE STORY.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

We come now to the account of man being placed in the garden of Eden; of the temptation set before him by his maker; of his "fall," and the consequent damnation of the human race.

In reference to this narrative, a learned Catholic clergyman of Chicago, called "Father" Terry, recently, in a sermon, termed the whole story an "epic poem" and that it simply is a "fiction." This is precisely our opinion of the matter, and we propose to express our views of it with quite as much freedom as Father T. did, even should the results prove equally unfortunate to us. For uttering his honest sentiments, his superior, Bishop Foley, deposed him and took away his official character. As, however, neither Bishop Foley, the Cardinal, the Pope, the "council," the "presbytery," nor the "synod" hold any authority over us, we will utter our opinions without fear of their vindictiveness.

The story has truly much the semblance of a fable,

and a fable, too, which reflects no great credit upon the plans, prescience and benevolence of the Creator. If God, from the remotest ages of eternity, had revolved in his mind the premeditated creation of the Universe, the earth and man—as it would seem he must have had abundant leisure to do, millions of times over—and if, after making man and woman perfect beings, and pronouncing them "good," he created a temptation—a snare, calculated to seduce them and lead them to destruction; and not themselves only, but countless billions of their descendants; if he also created a Devil for the express purpose of aiding him in placing this decoy before our innocent parents, thus luring them and their posterity forever to utmost wretchedness and misery, it would argue that he was either a very bad Creator, or that he was unable to circumvent the machinations of his wily creature and adversary, and thus prevent the total destruction of his favorite enterprise. Possibly, when God made the Devil, he did not intend quite so formidable an antagonist—one able to defeat all his plans, destroy his creation, and inaugurate a hell upon the earth.

There must either have been a serious defect in the plan, or in the power to execute it. God either did not correctly anticipate the difficulties he had to contend with, or it was his express purpose to make an innocent pair of human beings, and also to make and empower a Devil to tempt and beguile those innocents to commit the enormous crime of eating an apple, which "caused sin and all our woe." If God wanted man to be happy, why did he create the conditions that must inevitably make him unhappy? If he did not want man to eat the apple, why did he make it,

and place it before him? If he wished man to remain innocent and pure, why did he make a Devil to render him otherwise? Did he not know the result of his enterprise before he commenced it, and that the greatest evil must result from it? To deny this, is to confess him finite, short-sighted and weak, and to admit it makes him a monster.

Upon this absurd fable rests the whole Christian structure,—God made man perfect, and placed a temptation before him, sure to ruin him, and created a Devil also, to aid in seducing his victim into the trap set for him, and in consequence it became necessary for God to come down out of heaven, four thousand years afterwards, cohabit with a young woman, then to be born of that woman, and after thirty years to be put to death, and all this to appease his own anger, and to remove, in a very limited degree, the effects of the apple—all of which, with suitable precaution, might have been avoided. To an unprejudiced mind, the whole story appears most ridiculous, belittling God, and making him very deficient in knowledge, goodness and power.

Of the nature of the "tree of knowledge," which bore the fruit that cursed the world, nothing whatever is known. No description of the tree has ever been given; no naturalist or botanist has ever seen it, and whether it was like one of our apple trees, no one can tell. As the fruit of it produced an effect so unlike that of all other fruit the world has known, we must conclude the tree was totally unlike any other tree that ever grew. Why that variety of fruit has not been perpetuated as other varieties have been, cannot be told. Fruit from the tree of knowledge, which would cause mankind to know the nature of good and evil,

and make them as gods, it would seem, ought to have been perpetuated and largely cultivated. It may be urged that this particular kind of fruit was created for the express purpose of ruining mankind, and when this purpose was accomplished, was removed from the earth.

There exists considerable diversity of opinion as to the character of this fruit among different Bible believers. The greatest number profess to believe it was a literal apple like our Pippins and Spitzenbergs, while one sect (the Shakers) insist that the forbidden fruit was the untimely intercourse of the sexes, and that all the sin and crime the world has since known, came from that source, and consequently it has ever since been wrong for man and woman to have sexual intercourse. The number, however, who entertain this peculiar view of the forbidden fruit is very small indeed; by far the larger number believe in a literal tree and literal fruit. None, however, know anything about it; the several opinions have but little value, and it will not compensate us to spend much time in examining them. Of one thing we do feel assured, that it is a pity that so many millions of human beings will greedily swallow such silly stories, and base their hopes of happiness here and hereafter upon them.

The entire story of the fall is improbable and untenable. Instead of man being created in a high state of perfection, and falling to the lowest degradation, the truth is directly the reverse; his beginning was low down in the scale, slightly above the brute creation, and after thousands of years he gradually advanced until he became enlightened. Nearly all modern scientists agree upon this point, that man

once occupied a plane in existence much lower than he does to-day, and that he has gradually been progressing. In short, he did not "*fall*," but *arose*, and that his nature is *eternal progression.*

Much proof exists proving the truth of this position. Remains of human beings who lived on the earth in former eras have been found imbedded in rock, where they have lain more than forty thousand years. From the indications given, this race of human beings was much lower down in the scale of existence than the present human race. They lived in caves, and more like brutes than men, but were doubtless the progenitors of the present inhabitants of the globe, who have been gradually advancing in intelligence and culture.

There are, even now, in Australia, New Caledonia, and parts of South Africa, races of human beings who have not yet advanced out of the rudimental conditions. Some of them live in trees, leaping from branch to branch, like apes and baboons. They wander about, entirely naked in most cases, having no fixed homes or tribal property, no families or marriage relations. Their language is extremely imperfect and rudimental. They grow to be about four feet high, and come to maturity in twelve to fifteen years. It is with great difficulty they can be taught principles and ideas, their brains being imperfectly developed.

These are, doubtless, unadvanced races that have remained in their primitive, low, ignorant state, while the more progressive races which people the earth have completely outstripped them.

In view of the many facts in Nature, brought to light by the researches and labors of scientists, which

pointedly and totally contradict the Bible story of man's being made in a high state of perfection, from which he fell and became hopelessly degraded, it seems most strange how sensible people can still adhere to the system, founded upon the delusions of past ages of ignorance.

We will return to the Bible story. As the snake figures extensively in this wonderful narrative, we must not entirely disregard him. Without the part of the serpent, the drama would be most defective. For it seems God created this snake with powers and abilities to thwart his own designs and purposes. We are not told to what variety of the snake tribe this particular one belonged, whether boa-constrictor, anaconda, black snake, rattlesnake or moccasin, but we are, at all events, required to believe it had the organs of human speech, and could converse fluently with our great-grandmother.

Æsop, in his fables, by way of enforcing a moral lesson, gave speech to many varieties of animals, as lions, dogs, sheep, wolves, foxes, birds, etc., but we do not remember that he made snakes to talk, nor did he intend we should believe any of his animals really used human language; but in this Bible fable, we are required to positively believe in the conversational powers of the snake. Although we know no speech can take place without the organs of speech, and that no snake was ever known to possess these organs, we are not permitted to doubt that this particular snake was a most efficient talker; conversing with such suavity and persuasiveness that he completely wheedled our good old mother, and thereby circumvented God in a most remarkable manner.

Very probable, is it not, that a snake should circumvent and out-general God Almighty?

For thus using human language, and in "taking in" our maternal relative (and really we cannot understand what else he was made for), his snakeship seems to have been doomed to severe punishment; he was sentenced to crawl upon his belly and to eat dust all the days of his life. Whether, before this, he walked upright like a man, and ate apples, we are not informed; but we are led to believe he has ever crawled over the surface of the ground upon his belly, the same five, ten, and twenty thousand years ago as now. We cannot think the nature of the snake's locomotion has ever been changed, nor his diet. If he was condemned to eat dust, he has not done it. No one has ever seen snakes eating dust. They require animal food and insist upon having it alive. They are partial to eggs, chickens, frogs, etc., but never obey the injunction to "eat dust."

It is marvelous how easy thousands of people believe this Bible snake story. Is it really so probable that it should be swallowed without hesitation? Is it likely a snake became the antagonist of the Creator of the Universe, and proved himself completely the victor in the contest? Can it be possible sensible people will ever continue to believe such simple tales and think them the word of God because they are in the Bible? Such must place a low estimate indeed, upon their God to believe a snake could defeat him!

We think it entirely reasonable to decide with Father Terry, that the whole story is a fiction, gotten up by an unskillful person, and by men incorporated into their Bible, a book written, revised, amended, compiled, translated and printed by men, and in

which we can see no proofs of the workmanship of a God.

This fable has heretofore been preached as *literal* truth, and to be taken just as it reads, but modern clergymen and modern Christians, finding the whole story perfectly absurd, often claim it is not intended to be understood literally—that the forbidden fruit was not really an apple, nor the Devil a real snake. It, however, matters but little, so far as the principle is concerned. If God made man, and made the temptation, and made the Devil, and if he knew beforehand the necessary result of the conditions, it is just as much a monstrosity in the form of an allegory as if literally true. Besides, there is no authority for saying this story is not to be taken *literally* just as much as any part of the Bible. Who is authorized to say certain parts are to be taken literally, and certain other parts to be "spiritualized?" If the book is the "word of God," why did he not write it as he wished it understood?

It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when intelligent persons will cease to look to idle, silly tales as the word of God, but rather turn their attention to the study of unerring science, where a foundation of truth can be found safe to build upon.

The tales about talking snakes conversing with the human race; about a fruit possessing the power to damn the inhabitants of an entire world; about the snake persuading the woman to partake of this fruit, the maker of all things remaining in the back-ground without preventing his deadly foe from defeating his great experiment, when he must have known what was going on at the very moment it was transpiring; that in consequence of sin and death thus entering

the world and causing eternal enmity between him and his creatures, which it was impossible for him to remove without coming down from heaven four thousand years afterwards, and going through the process of cohabiting with a woman, and then afterwards being born of that woman, as we observed—and to grow up through puling infancy, childhood and youth, to manhood and then after wandering about over Judea, Galilee, and adjacent countries, a year or two, attended by ignorant fishermen and others, he found it necessary to be put to death that his own wrath might be so far appeased as to render it possible that a minute portion of the human family could escape the torments of hell, if they only believe in the efficacy of this sublime plan, and all the dogmas propounded to them by priests; such tales, we say, are fit only to be believed by small children and simple-minded people.

What a snake that must have been, to thus wholly defeat the Creator of the Universe, and, with an apple or two, entirely circumvent the wise plans and beneficent intentions of an all-wise and all-powerful God! It has been a question for ages, why God should have created a snake, a devil, or dragon capable of such great and irreparable injury to the creatures of his forming. Beautiful system, is it not? So full of loveliness, consistency and probability, that not a particle of either can be discerned in the entire scheme. And this jargon, this senseless muddle, is what theologians have to offer the world as "the grand, sublime and God-like plan of salvation!"

But, however abhorrent it may be to our every sense of beauty, justice and of Deity, we have to accept it according to their dictation and swear it is lovely—

it is glorious, and it is true, or suffer the torments of the damned in hell forever! It is most fortunate, however, for the human family, that these theologians have not the destiny of mankind at their disposal; that these absurd dogmas and blind creeds are all wrong, and that knowledge, wisdom, happiness and truth do not lie in the direction in which they point.

We will take a brief glance at some of the events mentioned in the Bible between the time when Adam and Eve were said to have been turned out of the garden of Eden and the deluge. They are given in a desultory, imperfect manner, and not as we might imagine a God would write them; but, as we are looking into the credibility, and divine authorship of the story, we will not pass them unnoticed.

After man and woman had partaken of the fruit of the tree of knowledge which grew in the garden God had planted, by which their eyes were opened and they understood the nature of good and evil, God, it seems, became very much incensed at it. To an ordinary perception this would appear an insufficient reason for his anger. If the fruit was good—from a divine source—if the effect was to impart knowledge and cause the recipient to know more of what was useful, it would seem it ought to be a good thing to eat, and that man could not fall very far by partaking of it. But, according to the story, God was very angry and cursed them both roundly—the woman with the pains of maternity (which, by-the-by, all species of animals have to endure) and the man to toil and labor—which has really been a great blessing to the race instead of a curse—and he also cursed the ground for his sake and caused thorns and thistles to

grow to trouble and annoy him. He was so incensed because the pair had partaken of the fruit of knowledge—becoming like gods—and was so apprehensive that man would reach forth his hand and also take of the tree of life and live forever, that he drove him out of the garden, and placed cherubim with "flaming swords which turned every way." What kind of a sword could that have been, to keep him from coming to the tree of life? Is it not a little singular that a good Deity should wish to keep man in ignorance, and prevent him also from having access to the tree of life and living forever? Would not the Devil have done better by us than that? Did he not try to prevent such a sad result? Did not the Devil, or the snake, by inducing Mother Eve to taste of the fruit of knowledge, take the very means to cause the human race to come in possession of information, intelligence and knowledge like unto the gods? Could he have had his way, would he not also have kept the tree of life within their reach so they could have lived forever? According to this tale, was not the Devil decidedly the best friend to the race of the two?

It seems God relented a little towards our unfortu nate first parents and made them coats of skin, and clothed them, before he sent them out to seek their fortunes. Rather crude ideas, those of the Deity which presides over the Universe, to engage in the manufacture of clothing from the skins of animals! The Devil would probably have taught them how to do it themselves.

But Adam, it seems, "knew his wife," and they raised Cain and Abel. The one tilled the ground and the other raised sheep, and they both together brought

offerings to the Lord, who accepted the last but not the first.

It would seem to us just and fair, or good policy, at any rate, that both should have been accepted, and thus have prevented a foul, fraternal homicide. God, however, repaired this omission by cursing Cain, putting a mark on him and driving him from the face of the earth, where every man's hand should be against him, (what man was there at that time except his father, Adam ?) and he went out from the presence of the Lord (how is that possible when he is everywhere ?) unto the land of Nod, and took a wife, and built a city. It has been a question how Cain could have found a wife, when there was no woman in the world save his mother; and our good divines have failed to answer it satisfactorily. They merely enjoin it upon us, that we must believe it, because God wrote it.

Marrying and begetting children seemed after this to go on merrily and rapidly, and the sons of God, too, saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took them for wives, and giants were the result. We must believe, of course, that God had sons, unlike the human race, and that they cohabited with the daughters of men, for it is in the Bible. Who those sons of God were, and where they came from, the account does not state. It is to be presumed, however, that they came down from heaven and were angels.

From the remark that God is said to have made, "Behold, the man is become as *one of us*," as well as by the previous words of the Devil, "Ye shall become as *gods*," together with there being so many sons of gods who cohabited with the daughters of men, we are led to suppose that, at that time, the gods were

pretty numerous, or at least that there were more than one. The monotheistic idea, which Moses afterwards learned from the Egyptians, had not then been adopted, and the belief in a multiplicity of gods, which was the early belief of all the races of men, seems to have been the one entertained.

We must believe also, that men lived then to be nine hundred years old and over, and this, less than six thousand years ago, and upon no evidence save the simple statement in Genesis. Geologists find remains of the human race imbedded in the rocks and caves, which they estimate must have existed upon the earth from fifty to seventy-five thousand years ago, but they find no evidence of such immense longevity, nor does Nature anywhere give such evidence. All animated existence is limited to a period vastly shorter than a thousand years, and it is probable it always was so. As the narrative was written many hundreds of years after the events were said to have occurred, and by one who could have no positive information upon the subject, it is very easy to imagine how these statements could have been wrongfully made, and a fabulous character given them. The matter of giants alluded to is also without authenticity. Men have occasionally attained a size above the average, but the proofs of a race of giants have never been found.

The affair of Enoch being transferred to heaven bodily, and which is so indefinitely alluded to in the story, is imagination altogether. The expression that he "walked with God and was not, for God took him," is hardly sufficient data, for us to believe that he was taken bodily up into heaven. We now know that the upper atmosphere is so rarified that a human being removed to a distance of ten miles, only, from the

surface of the earth, would perish almost instantly. At an altitude of about five miles, reached by balloons and by climbing high mountains, it has been found impossible to exist, except by inhaling oxygen taken along for the purpose, and the rarefication of the atmosphere at that height, even, is so great that blood-vessels have burst and life been seriously endangered. Animal life cannot be sustained except near the surface of the earth.

It seems by the story that wickedness became very great upon the earth; that God saw it and became very much grieved and angered about it—so much so that he repented of what he had done, that he had made man or any part of animated existence. It grieved him to the heart that he had placed man upon the earth, and he resolved to destroy all animal life he had formed, not wicked men only, but also the beasts of the field and every creeping thing, and even the fowls of the air, which neither had fallen nor committed any wickedness.

It is a sad representation indeed, which is here given of the great God of the Universe, that he should regret what he had done—that he should repent of his actions and moodily sink into a state of despondency. It is also a sad picture of divine justice that he should destroy beasts, birds and reptiles without number, for the wrongs man had done. Is it really justice to destroy the innocent for the sins of the wicked? According to the story, however, the innocent were doomed to suffer for the guilty, and the same cruel sentence was passed upon all, and that, too, has been what has constituted "divine justice" ever since. The innocent have constantly been suffering for the guilty, and his own innocent son seems to have been brought into existence for the express purpose of suffering for the guilty.

The Story of the Flood.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

We are so often told by Bible defenders and worshipers, that that book contains "inherent evidence of its divinity," it is proper for us to continue our investigations and see if we can discover these *inherent evidences* that it was written by the hand of God. If he wrote it, it contains nought but truth and excellence; for he is all truth and perfection, and if we find error or falsehood, it is proof positive he had nothing to do with it.

We will at this time make a few brief observations upon the Bible account of the flood, and see how they compare with reason, science and truth.

The deluge is one of the great events in Bible history, and fills an important part in the story upon which the Jewish and Christian religions are founded. It may be said, almost, to be the corner-stone of the structure, and if this is removed, the whole building inevitably falls.

It seems it was but a few generations after the

creation, when everything was pronounced good and satisfactory, before the creatures God had made, had become so wicked that his patience with them was completely exhausted, and he regretted very much that he had made man. We are told in other places, that God is unchangeable—that he repenteth not, and is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," but as it says in this place "*it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*," we are bound to suppose it was so, and though he was the architect of the entire Universe, and had the power to know every event that would occur in all future times, we are at the same time required to think he was so weak-minded as to get discouraged and be sorry for what he had done, and to come to the determination to destroy not only the human race, but the entire animal creation, quadrupeds, reptiles, birds, insects and all, which we have no reason to suppose had been at all guilty of the wickedness of man. It seems hard that a merciful and just God should put millions upon millions of innocent beings to death, for the crimes others had committed. Can it be that God would be guilty of such conduct? The book says so, and those who feel constrained to believe a part, have to believe this portion also. It would seem a Deity "with power equal to his will," could have hit upon some plan of killing off the wicked inhabitants of the earth, if he wished to do so, in a more easy and expeditious manner—and in the space of a few days or hours, without subjecting myriads of harmless animals to the same cruel fate. To view it in the best possible light, it was a tedious, indirect mode by which to get rid of the sinful men and women on earth, to drown it out, and all in it, except

what could take passage on a single boat; requiring a whole year to embark, and to await the rising and falling of the waters. On other occasions it seems God has smitten to death in one night or one hour, thousands of his children with very little apparent effort, and one would think he could have done it just as well on this occasion, by plague, pestilence or some other merciful touch of his hand, without resorting to the slow, troublesome process, of creating or producing such an immense volume of water, necessary to drown out the whole earth and cover it to the tops of the highest mountains and leave the innocent portion of his creation uninjured. But we have to suppose this plan did not suit him at that time, and that nothing but drowning the world—the men, women and children; the horses, cows, sheep, dogs, cats, rats and mice, hens, turkeys, doves, sparrows, linnets, and thousands of other species of animal existences, would answer his purpose.

After coming to the cruel decision to take this merciless course, it seems he had interviews with old man Noah, (who had lived to be six hundred years of age) and told him how to fashion the ark, what kind of wood to make it of—the size of the ark, the size of the door and the one window—and Noah being a good sort of man, followed instructions, and the ark was gotten up according to specifications.

God seems to have changed his tactics somewhat since those days. Now, if a man, or a set of men, decide to build a ship, schooner, steamboat or raft, he seems not to interfere, and lets them get the same up about as they wish to, and does not trouble himself much about its length, width or height. Not so in Captain Noah's time; the entire details were given

then by God, and Noah had just to carry them out to the letter.

It is unnecessary to enumerate all the details ; the reader is doubtless familiar with them. Every person is necessarily so, who has grown up in this Christian country. Our purpose is to look at these "inherent evidences of divinity," and to see if the statements in this remarkable narrative comport with divine truth as found in reason and science. To our mind, the whole story abounds with so much that is crude, improbable and impossible, that we are compelled to discredit it, and we are far more constrained to think it the work of some ill-informed person that to suppose God ever wrote it, or dictated it. We will not have space in this article to consider all the points in this remarkably damp subject, but will notice a few of them.

One of the difficulties to get over, is to understand where such a vast quantity of water, sufficient to cover the whole surface of the earth, five miles or more in depth, (for it takes that distance to reach the tops of the highest mountains which we are told were covered) could come from. Think for a moment, of the vast amount that would be required to envelope the whole earth, to the depth of five miles, remembering the earth is twenty-five thousand miles in circumference in either direction. Why, it would take hundreds of times as much water as is in existence in connection with this planet. Where *could* this water all come from ? Where could it all have been stored? And where, again, could it all have gone to, when the rain was over? It hardly answers to use the argument commonly given us on occasions like this by our Christian friends, "all things are possible with

God." It is not true; *all* things are *not* possible with God. He cannot be inconsistent with himself—he cannot act against himself—he cannot lie. If we know anything of God at all, it is that Nature's laws were established by him, and that he never transcends them. It would be nearly as consistent to ask us to believe that God caused water enough to fill the entire orbit of Neptune, thus submerging the sun, the earth and all the planets in the solar system, as to ask us to believe that, by "breaking up the fountains of the deep and opening the windows of heaven," water enough was let down in forty days to cover the entire earth, to the depth of five miles. What a clumsy description—what an impossible story!

Reader, just think for a moment how fast it must have rained to make five miles in depth in forty days; (the tops of the highest mountains are more than five miles above the level of the sea). The highest point of the Himalaya mountains is 29,200 feet high; thus, the water would have to fall to the depth of 730 feet per day, thirty feet and five inches per hour, or six and a half inches per minute; and this for forty days and nights over the whole earth. And this too without taking into account the increased diameter of the earth as we diverge from its usual surface. It would require a vastly greater quantity of water for the last mile than the first—more, even, than exists on the earth to-day. The rain that could produce such a rise may, in South-western parlance, be well denominated "a right smart shower." All the water-spouts, "cloud bursts" and torrents the world has ever known could not produce one trillionth part of the water that this one rain did. We are appalled at the immense

quantity of water, and again ask, where could it all come from?

The atmosphere could support but a small fraction of it when evaporated; then what became of it? Let us for a moment consider the utter impossibility of the evaporation of such a body of water at a distance of five miles from the earth's surface. At an altitude of 12,000 feet we find perpetual snow, even under the equator. It is so cold at that height, that snow never melts, and, consequently, cannot evaporate. Add nearly 18,000 feet more to this altitude and we arrive at a point so cold that it would never rain or snow there, and could it be possible for water to reach that height, it would freeze at once fifty feet in depth, never again to melt or evaporate.

Mount Ararat, where the ark is said to have effected a landing, is over seventeen thousand feet high, which is five or six thousand feet above the line of perpetual snow. It would be a pretty cold altitude for the disembarkment of animals belonging to the tropics and southern temperate zones, and they would inevitably perish long before they could get down where it was warm enough to suit their natures.

Reader, the impossibility and falseness of this deluge story are very apparent. It is simply an impossibility. Such an event never occurred, and God never wrote any such statement, though it may be found in a thousand Bibles. He is not the author of such unmitigated and foolish falsehoods.

Instead of finding "inherent evidence" of divinity in this statement, we find inherent evidence of ignorance and stupidity. Let us not for a moment suppose God requires us to throw away our reason and common sense to believe such insipid twaddle.

God is not such an unreasonable being; nor does he require man to so stultify himself and all that is divine in his nature. The highest and truest conception we can have of God, is truth, goodness and justice, the opposite of falsehood, revenge and oppression. Let us then believe him to be a good being, not a monster of cruelty and wrong.

We will proceed to further examine the "inherent evidences" of what is claimed to be "God's word," and see how they bear investigation. Of course it is not in our power to do any harm to anything really divine, but if we can aid in removing the mask of deception used to cover that which is false, we will certainly be doing a good deed toward our fellow men.

We have seen that at the time of the flood—but a few generations from Adam—the inhabitants of the earth could not have been very numerous—not a thousandth part as numerous as they have since become. We are to understand that at that time but a few of the countries of the globe were peopled, but God deemed it necessary to go to the trouble of drowning the globe five miles in depth, to remove the few thousands of people at that time on the earth, when he was able to accomplish the task in other ways, in an hour or in a moment, and as we remarked, without subjecting innocent, unoffending birds and animals to the same cruel fate.

But as God had decided to destroy "every living thing that lived upon the earth," it must needs be accomplished. But why destroy one portion of animal life, and save another? Was it because a part of the animal creation was less guilty than another? Prof. Denton pertinently enquires, "why should the

beasts, birds and creeping things be destroyed? What had the larks, the doves and the bob-o-links done? What had the squirrels and rabbits done, that they should be destroyed? If the land animals had to be destroyed, why not also those of the sea? Were the dogs sinners, and the dog-fish saints? Had the sheep been more guilty than the sharks? Had the pigeons become utterly corrupt, and the pikes remained perfectly innocent?" It is truly very difficult to reconcile the story with the idea of equal and impartial justice.

As the person who wrote the account knew nothing about the rotundity of the earth, very little of its size and extent, or the altitude of its mountains, it is not strange, perhaps, that he accorded so heavy a contract to God, as to submerge so vast an orb with such an immense depth of water. He doubtless thought the earth was only of limited extent and of level surface—not spherical—and that a moderate quantity of water would be sufficient to cover it. This ignorance on the part of the writer, proves it to be a human production, and that God had no more to do with writing it, or dictating it, than an inhabitant of the Feejee Islands.

The author of the tale was also very ignorant of the number of varieties of birds, animals, and creeping things that exist upon the earth, the amount of room that would be needed to contain them, and the necessary food to sustain them for a year, or he would have known that the ark, whose dimensions he gives, was wholly insufficient for the purpose.

Let us see for a moment, what the cargo of the ark invoiced to, and what the proximate number of species of the animal world amounted to. Of birds alone, Lessen, the naturalist, estimates at 6,000, while Gray,

another distinguished naturalist, in his "Genera of Birds," estimates them at 8,000; of these, seven males and seven females each, or 112,000 birds, in all were taken into the ark. Besides these, two of every species of unclean beasts and fourteen of every variety of clean beasts had to be taken in, and they made an extensive ménagerie indeed. The ablest and most recent Zoological authorities, enumerate the animal kingdom as follows: Of *mammals*, or milk-giving animals, 2,000 species; *ruminantia*, or cud-chewers, 167; *pachyderma*, or thick-skinned mammals, as the horse, elephant, hog, etc., 412; *edentia*, the sloth, the ant-eaters, etc., 35; *rodentia*, or gnawers—the rat, squirrel, the beaver, etc., 617; *carnivora*, or flesh-eaters, 446; *cheiropetra*, the bat tribe, 328; *quadrumana*, or monkeys, 221; *marsupials*, or pouched-mammals like the opossom and kangaroo, 127.

Of the reptiles, there are 637 species, exclusive of 200 varities, that can live in water.

Of the insects, including ants, beetles, flies, bugs, fleas, mosquitoes, wasps, bees, moths, butterflies, spiders, scorpions, grasshoppers, locusts, myriapods, canker-worms, and wriggling, creeping, crawling, flying insects, are almost inconceivable and numberless, but they all had to have a place.

It will not be an over-estimate to put down Noah's family, that he housed and boarded for a year, as follows: 112,000 birds; 10,000 clean and unclean beasts; 200,000 insects, flies, fleas, bugs and worms, or a total of over 320,000 living beings—an immense host indeed for one old man and his three boys to care for, during twelve months. What a herculean task it must have been to have gathered all these animals together from

all parts of the world, and at a time when there were no railroads, steamboats, or other adequate means of transportation. How long would it now take four persons to collect in one place, from all parts of the earth, from two to fourteen of every existing species of birds, beasts and insects with the positive certainty that thousands upon thousands of them must inevitably die off before they could be gathered? A century would be insufficient. What a profound knowledge of natural history old Noah must have had, to be able to select accurately every variety of animated existence; to know when he had all kinds, and when he had male and female in proper proportion of the bugs and small insects. Has a human being ever lived that could perform this task? Assuredly not. How could he have safely carried the immense quantity of flies, fleas, bugs, beetles, caterpillars, worms, grasshoppers, locusts, and all that constitutes insect life, together with the necessary food for the journey? Would not a great portion of them inevitably die, thus taken and transported contrary to their natures? What a time, too, he must have had in hunting up the wild beasts in the forests—which, at that time, covered nearly all the land on the globe—and what a task he must have found in driving the lions, the tigers, the leopards, hyenas, bears and wolves. Is it probable that they were so tractable, mild and docile, as to allow him to drive them as we drive sheep? Could wolves and sheep, tigers and calves, foxes and chickens, be driven promiscuously together? Would not Noah's own life have been seriously endangered by going among these wild beasts? How else could they have been gathered together to enter the ark? Did they come of their own volition from

the four points of the compass, for Noah to put them into the ark ? or were they informed of the coming "wet spell," while the human race was kept in ignorance of it ? If a few of each variety were so informed, and the others kept in ignorance, was it equal justice to all ?

What an immense labor, also, it must have been to collect the necessary food for this great congregation of animated life, and what a vast variety of the same had to be procured! The elephants, camels, cattle, horses, sheep, etc., would require hay; the lions, tigers, panthers, wolves, bears, and all the wild beasts would require animal food, and could live on nothing else. Many animals would require leaves of certain trees, and grasses of special kinds. Many varieties of birds require seeds and grains, and the immense numbers there were of them would necessitate enormous supplies. Many kinds of the coarser birds require fish, and, as they are hearty feeders, great quantities would have to be provided, and as fish soon spoil after being taken out of the water, they would have to be kept in tanks of water, or the smell from decomposing fish would be so offensive that Noah and his sons, and their wives, could not have stood it, and the storks, flamingoes, penguins, petrels, cranes, and gulls, would not eat them. .

Many animals and birds live upon insects of various kinds; and what a task it must have been to gather all that kind of food, and preserve it so that it would not spoil. Some species of animals feed on bugs and worms, some on bees, and some on ants; some of the ant-eaters are six and eight feet in length, and thousands of ants are necessary for one of them for a single meal. Think what it would require for a pair a

year or two! Some insects live on bark, some on flowers, some on resinous secretions, some on pollen, some on honey, some on the sap of plants, some on green leaves. Thirty distinct species are said to live on the nettle alone; two hundred kinds subsist on the oak. Many animals live on fruits, and nuts of all kinds that grow.

Space will not permit us to particularize too much. The labor of getting all these animals, birds, reptiles, and insects on to one place—some of them from a distance of ten or twelve thousand miles, and protecting them from harm while being collected together, with procuring and preserving the requisite quantities and varieties of food for the time being, and the year while in the ark, could not possibly be performed by ten thousand men in a year's time. In short, there are hundreds of impossibilities connected with the story that no number of men could overcome. How, then, could aged Noah, and his three boys, have performed the task?

But, admitting it to be possible for all this vast host of animated life to be congregated together, with the necessary amount of food, how could all possibly have been stored away in a vessel the size of the ark? It was not large enough to contain the food alone for a year's supply. The length of the ark was three hundred cubits, the width fifty, and the height thirty. Some authorities make the cubit to be eighteen inches, while the highest estimate is twenty-two inches. It does not require an elaborate calculation to show that an ark of these dimensions could not possibly contain all, even though the animals, birds, reptiles and insects were piled up together like cord wood.

Waving these impossibilities, however, let us imagine that all *are* well inside (though Noah and his sons could not put in the food alone in six months), we still find enormous difficulties to contend with. There was but one door and one window to the ark, which were fastened, for it must be remembered "the Lord shut them all in." If the window, even, was left open, it was small, being only one and a half cubits in size, and totaly inadequate for ventilation. It will be remembered, the ark was pitched without and within, so that all the air this huge mass of animal life had to sustain them, must come in at this one small aperture. The stench and foulness of the air of that place can hardly be imagined. It would seem every animal must, under such circumstances, be smothered to death in half an hour. If it were possible to place such a multitude of animals, birds and insects in a close vessel of the size of the ark, there would not one of them be left alive at the expiration of a single week. Think of the excrement, solid, semi-solid and fluid that must necessarily be voided by the tens of thousands of these living beings. What a time Noah and his boys must have had in conveying it up three stories to the small window at the top, and throwing it out on the flat roof, and this to be kept up, day and night, for nearly four hundred days! Nice business, was it not? Would it be possible for one old man and his three boys to accomplish the task? The men and women who were drowned may have had a sad time of it, and it seems cruel in their Creator to have treated them thus, but we would certainly prefer their situation to that of Noah and his family. They were immersed in a stinking, loathsome hell, the most dis-

gusting that can be imagined, vastly worse than being decently and divinely drowned.

It is impossible for us to exhaust this beautiful subject—these "inherent evidences" of the divine authority of the story in one article, and we must defer a further consideration till our next.

In pursuing our examination of this subject let it be borne in mind that it is not for the purpose of casting a stigma upon that which is really true and divine, or treating with levity that which millions regard as sacred and solemn, but to see if the narrative is positively the work of the hand of God, or whether it is the silly tale of an ignorant person. If it really is *divine* we will find it to contain the elements of *truth* and *beauty*, while if it is false and inconsistent we must regard it as a human production only.

In our last we left Captain Noah floating around in his huge vessel without sail or rudder. (As the masters of all vessels of much smaller size are honored with the title of *Captain*, it is probably not amiss that we should also accord this modern title to father Noah.) We left him and his three boys busily engaged in cleaning out, and carrying to the one small window in the roof, the profuse droppings and necessary filth of that great assemblage of live stock. We still have a pity for him in the onerous duty he had to perform. Think for a moment, dear reader, of the amount of labor it would require at the hands of an old man six hundred years of age and his three boys to safely protect, to feed and care for 300,000 living animals, closely shut up for more than a year in an ark pitched without and within! Did four men, before or since, ever have such a task to perform? Would not such

a vast number of animals, birds and insects whose nature was be out in the free, open air, stiffle, sicken and die in such a close unventilated atmosphere? Would it not require as a great miracle to keep them alive under such circumstances as it would to preserve their lives in the water, or to create them anew? We are told it only took a part of a day to make them all in the first place. It would certainly seem very troublesome to keep up a continued miracle of more than a year's duration, merely to preserve this animal life, when God could so easily reproduce it in a few hours.

As we remarked, there are so many absurdities and impossibilities in the story that it seems marvelous to us how sensible people have been able to give their assent to it, and to believe that it was written by the hand of God. It must be well understood there were many thousand forms of existence that required peculiar conditions and food which they could not possibly have for thirteen months in the Ark.

We before alluded to the difficulty of procuring the immense variety of food necessary for all these animals while being gathered together preparatory to entering the Ark, and let us dwell a little longer upon the subject now that they are all shut in. Many forms of animal life require fresh food in the form of grass, herbage and leaves, and can live on nothing else; how could they get it there? Others require insects, grubs and bugs; how could they be furnished for a year? It of course would not do to use up the stock gathered to preserve the species, and they also would soon be exhausted if so used. Many of the large birds, as we have seen, live upon fish alone and it would require an immense supply for them a whole

year; where were they obtained? We are not told anything about Noah's having conveniences for fishing; and he could have no adequate facilities for getting the necessary amount of fish from the roof of the Ark, and even if he had, he had more to do than he possibly could attend to, without fishing; but how did the penguins, pelicans, flamingoes, cormorants, petrels, herons, storks, albatroses, cranes, gulls, ducks, and hundreds of other water fowls get their food? Of course they must eat; they could not fast for a year.

A large proportion of what are called wild animals require animal fowl, freshly killed and can subsist on nothing else. How did they get their year's supplies? We are told nothing about this, nor whether they eat it all or not ; but is it reasonable to suppose that the lions, tigers, panthers, leopards, hyenas, wolves, bears, dogs, etc. etc., would be long quiet without something to eat? Would they not be apt to " pitch into " the sheep, goats, cattle, hares, rabbits and the hundreds of smaller animals, and soon exterminate them ? We are not told about any food of this kind being provided them, and we cannot reasonably suppose any was so provided, for it would take more animals, suited for the purpose, to sustain all the carnivorous beasts for a year, than the whole ark would contain ; and they, too, must have food, or they would become so emaciated with starvation as to afford no nourishment to other animals. It does seem impossible to believe the wild beasts named, would, or could, live a year without food. Mr. Barnum, and other showmen, could easily give us information as to the amount of animal flesh required for the wild beasts, and the amount of labor required to take necessary care of them.

Where did the elephants, camels, giraffes, horses, asses, cattle, deer, elk, sheep, goats, etc., etc., get their food? Could they live a year without eating? What a bulk of hay and fodder it must have required for them during that long voyage. How did the ant-eaters get their supply? How did the animals who subsist on honey get theirs? There are nineteen species of goat-suckers, or one hundred and thirty individuals that feed on moths, beetles etc., etc., Then one hundred and thirty-seven species or nine hundred and fifty-nine individual fly-catchers; there are thirty-seven species of bee-eaters, or two hundred and fifty-nine individuals. How could all these find their food? Flowers are necessary for the existence of some birds and insects—where were they obtained? Many animals live on fruits alone, many on nuts and seeds; where in the ark could they be found? How about those insects which do not live a year; did the same ones who went into the Ark come ont again sound and well? Really, more questions can be asked in relation to this story of the big flood than our Christian friends can satisfactorily answer; and many we will pass by.

One of the great obstacles to get over, is, how all the varities of animals could get along peaceably and quietly together. The nature of many varieties is so ferocious that they would not live amicably with lambs and kids. We are told nothing about any being put in cages or fastened with chains; and in the illustrations which have accompanied the narrative, we have seen all the animals marching in or out, in pairs, and with all the order and precision of a regiment of well-trained soldiers, and sometimes a boy with a long gad driving them. Is it to be supposed that

the wild beasts of the forest, the lions, the tigers, the rhinoceroses could live in docility with the deer, the sheep and the horses ? Would the eagles, the condors, the vultures and the hawks dwell tamely with the doves, the quails, the robins and the chickens ? Would the anaconda, the boa-constrictor, the cobra and the rattlesnake never interfere with the kid, the guinea-pig, the frog, or the mouse ? Would all the antagonistic animals existing thus move and live together in perfect harmony and peacefulness ? Is there anything like it in our experience of the animal kingdom ?

Would such a diverse and incongruous collection of wild and tame animals thus shut up in the dark, and packed like sardines in a box, naturally become a "happy family" as Barnum exhibits ? Or did it require God's constant attention for thirteen months to keep the strong and ferocious from destroying the weak and timid ? Can any sane person believe such a condition possible ?

We have alluded to Mount Ararat where the ark is said to have rested. It was 17,000 feet high—a long way above eternal frost and snow. Is it not singular that God did not cause the Ark to float until it could rest lower down in the valley where the cold would not be so intense as to destroy a great portion of the animals, birds and insects as soon as they should emerge from the ark, even if they were warm enough while inside.

And how about the food for all this host of animals after leaving the ark, though they had required none before ? Remember the earth had been under water for a year, and in that time every tree, plant and vegetable, every blade of grass must inevitably have been killed, for experience teaches us that vegetation

will not stand drowning for a year much better than the animal world. How were all the thousands of varieties in the vegetable kingdom reproduced? Did it require another special creation? It must have done, but we are told nothing on this ground. If we were so told it would not be easy to believe it, but hearing nothing about it, we are left entirely in the dark, and must believe what to us seems most reasonable.

Does the story not involve the great absurdity that God deliberately destroyed all vegetable life on the globe for the sake of getting rid of man? Why was not Noah instructed to take a specimen of each tree, shrub and plant, little and big, with him into the ark, that they might be spared from the devastating flood? Was it not as necessary to preserve the vegetable kingdom as the animal? Could one be reproduced or recreated easier than the other?

A strong fact in opposition to the story of the deluge is the existence of volcanoes in various parts of the earth, whose altitude is far inferior to that of Ararat, and whose open craters have been belching and smoking for thousands of years before the time allotted to the flood; and geologists find not the slightest indications that water has ever entered them. Hugh Miller stated that in the numerous extinct or long slumbering volcanoes of Auvergne, France, and along the flanks of Etna, as well as in various other parts of the world, of at least triple antiquity of the Noachian deluge and though composed of ordinary incoherent materials, exhibit no mark of denudation.

Sir Charles Lyell says, "no devastating flood could ever have pased over the forest zone of Ætna during the last twelve thousand years." These authorities are cer-

tainly much more reliable than the unknown and unlearned writer of the book of Genesis.

Let us imagine for a moment th at the earth is thus covered with water to the tops of the highest mountains, and pressing down in immense volumes into the wide mouths of the numerous volcanoes on the globe, which connect directly with the internal and superheated fires of the earth : think for a moment what volumes of vapor and gases must be immediately generated, and what tremendous consequences must be the reult. The earth would be torn in fragments by explosions. Not all the earthquakes that have ever taken place would be "flea-bites" compared to it.

Another insurmountable argument against the truth of the story is of an archæological character. Nations have existed from a time long anterior to that allotted to the deluge, and they have no account of any such flood, and their continued existence is proof positive of the falsity of the story. Prominent among such nations, are the Chinese and the Egyptians. They have histories and inscriptions leading back into antiquity at least twelve thousand years. Bayard Taylor and other distinguished archæologists, state that Egypt presents abundance of proofs that it has uninterruptedly *existed as a nation* for more than twelve thousand years. China claims an equal antiquity. Can these facts be reconciled with the story of a universal flood less than five thousand years ago? If the world was totally drowned out, would those nations not have known something about it? The Egyptians had abundance of mummies, statues, inscriptions, paintings and other representations belonging to a period much older than Noah's time. Lepsius, writing from the pyramids of Memphis, in 1843, said: "We

are still busy with structures, sculptures and inscriptions, which are to be classed by means of the now more accurately determined gronps of kings in an epoch of highly flourishing civilization, as far back as the fourth millennium before Christ," or nearly two hundred years before the time of the Ark. Chevalier Bunsen, in his elaborate and philosophical work on ancient Egypt, has satisfied many learned scholars by an appeal to monumental inscriptions still extant, that the successive dynasties of kings may be traced back without a break to Menes, and that the date of his reign corresponds with a time nearly thirteen hundred years before the time of the flood.

Again, Lepsius asserted, in the "Types of Mankind," that negroes and other Africanic races, existed on the upper Nile, at least, 2,300 years before Christ; as this would be less than fifty years from the time of the deluge, it would follow they could not have been the progeny of Ham; interim sufficient not having elapsed for nations to have sprung up.

In view of hnndreds of impossibilities and absurdities of the Bible story of the deluge, and in face of the positive proofs that such an occurence could never have taken place, it is not at all strange that modern clergymen should now preach that a belief in a literal deluge as described, is not to be expected, and if it occurred at all, it was only local or partial—that science and religion go hand in hand, and that the former does not conflict with the latter. The Rev. Dr. Talmage, one of the first clergymen in our sister city of Brooklyn, in a late leader in his paper, the *Christian at Work*, says, "The Bible account of the creation of the world from a Sunday to a Friday, the totality of the deluge, the utter mobility of the sun, (at the

time Joshua commanded it to stand still,) are no longer preached from the pulpit." The Doctor greatly misrepresents the truth—they *are* still preached from the pulpit, but the fact of his, and other learned doctors of divinity, trying to ignore these old, silly stories, and the endeavor to make their religion harmonize with the demonstrations of science, proves pretty conclusively, the utter untenability of the "sacred stories." But, gentlemen of the clergy, how are you going to get away from the facts? The book which you still insist is the word of God, says positively, that God declared, before he produced the flood, that he would "utterly destroy both man and beast, and every creeping thing," and again, "the end of all flesh is come before me. I will destroy them with the earth. I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life under the heaven and everything in the earth shall die."

We are afterwards expressly told the floods *did* come and "covered the earth to the tops of the highest mountains and that all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle and of beasts and every creeping thing and every man." Now, reverend sirs, how are you going to get around this? The story is either true, or it is false, and you ought, if you believe it to be false, have the honesty to say so, and not try to dodge the issue. You, however, see it *cannot be true* and you endeavor to evade it, and still insist that the story is the "word of God." It certainly is a part of a great fable, and a very important part. It is recognized as true by many who are called "sacred writers," and among others by him who is called the "Son of God." In Matt. xxv, 37-39 he is reported as saying, "But as the days of Noe were,

so shall, also, the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the Ark and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." If Dr. Talmage and his learned coadjutors do now disbelieve the story, and wish to set it aside, it is evident their master believed the account and gave it his endorsement. This proves he was only mortal, and as liable to be deceived and mistaken as other men.

There are many additional points relative to the story of the deluge that might be alluded to, showing its complete incompatibility with the teachings of science; but as we have much other matter in the same book to pay some attention to, we must not dwell too long upon any one part of it.

Before leaving the subject, however, we will say a few words in reference to the assuaging of the waters, or their evaporation after the big rain was over. It will be borne in mind that the water covered the entire surface of the earth, to the depth of five miles or more, and that the evaporation of this vast body of water was no insignificant operation. The story says, "God caused a wind to pass over the earth and the waters assuaged." We submit it, that it would take a pretty stiff breeze and long continued, to evaporate such a quantity of water, and the questions naturally arise, where would the vapor find place to go to? Where could such a volume of water, in the form of vapor be stored? It is well known that the evaporation which takes place on the surface of the earth, is sustained in the form of clouds, etc., by the

atmosphere, and that when the accumulation arrives at a certain point, the atmosphere cannot longer retain it and it descends again in the form of dew and rain and snow. As it would be utterly impossible for the atmosphere to retain permanently, in form of vapor, one millionth part of such a quantity of water, the assertion that all was so retained is an utter absurdity. This must be obvious to the most partial observer of Nature's laws. Though it might evaporate any number of times, the atmosphere could not retain it, and it must inevitably fall to the earth again. This is conclusive, as to the falsity of the narrative. The person who wrote it knew nothing of the utter impossibility of such an event ever taking place.

The first thing it seems Noah did after leaving the ark and taking with him his family and the preserved species of all animated existences, was to erect an altar unto the Lord upon which he offered burnt offerings of one at least of every clean beast and every clean fowl that had been with him a year in the ark, and which seems to have been preserved for this express purpose, and the sweet smell of this savor seemed to have a remarkable effect upon the Lord, for he "said in his heart I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither shall I smite any more everything living, as I have done." Now if Noah could have builded this altar and burned these animals and fowls for the Lord to smell, as a sweet savor in his nostrils, fifteen months earlier, and thus have gotten him into a pleasant humor with all his creation, what a vast destruction of

life it would have averted, and what great labor and trouble it would have saved the two.

It seems after the flood was over that the Lord became convinced of the inutility of the destroying process as a remedy for the ills that existed, and the results proved the correctness of his convictions; for when, from the seed or stock which Noah had preserved in the ark, the earth had again become peopled with a new race of animals and men, they were just as wicked as they were before the flood, thus showing conclusively that the entire experiment had been a failure, and that the labor had been completely thrown away. It seems the Lord so regarded it, for he promised he would not do so again—another instance of his repenting his course and changing his mind; and though we are afterwards told he never does this thing, and that he is unchangeable—"the same yesterday, to-day and forever;" and in other cases that he was "not a man, that he should repent," we are nevertheless required to believe the older story at least as true; for in a number of places in Genesis, we are informed the Lord *did* repent of what he had done. As it is perfectly easy for our Christian friends to believe both statements—that he does repent and that he does *not*—we should, perhaps, admire the facility with which they perform the difficult task.

As we said, so thoroughly did the Lord seem impressed with the inutility of the drowning process, that he voluntarily entered into a covenant with Noah, that he would not again resort to it—that there should never be another flood to "cut off all flesh," and to destroy the earth. To seal the bargain, it says, he set his bow in a cloud. Many believe this was the origin of the rainbow; but as the rays of the sun

falling upon mist or fine rain produce it, and as the same causes under the same conditions must in all cases produce the same results, it is but fair to suppose that this simple phenomena occurred millions of times before Noah, as it has millions of times since. The writer of the book of Genesis was evidently ignorant of what produces the rainbow.

Inasmuch, however, as God seemed to be in a benignant mood when "he set his bow" in this instance, resolving never more to destroy life by a flood, what a fine thing it would have been for men, and women, and beasts and fowls living upon the earth one year and a quarter previous to that if he could have set his bow then, and decided not to drown out life from the earth. They then would have been the recipients of the same mercy, kindness and justice that he accorded to their successors ; but that was an instance when God was not the same yesterday, today, and forever. It was their misfortune to live at a time when the justice of a Deity required a vast destruction of animal life because his plans had not worked as he expected, and because the conduct of his creatures had been in accordance with the natures and motives with which they had been endowed.

Among the first things which Father Noah did after he resumed the regular avocations of life, was to plant a vineyard and engage in the grape culture ; but it is a pity it had to be recorded of that good man—one who had found special favor in the sight of God, that he should be deficient in the virtue of temperance to the extent that he should get "beastly drunk "and lie naked in his tent. His son Ham seeing the nakedness of his old father while lying in this drunken sleep, mentioned the fact to his two brothers, when

they stepped into the tent backward, or with their faces averted, so as not to see their father's nakedness, and covered him with a garment. The conduct of Ham does not seem to have been very reprehensible but his father was very angry with him for it, and cursed his son Canaan bitterly, dooming him and his offspring to servitude to his brethren and their offspring. We can see the beauty of this phase of Divine justice when we remember that our Christian friends have said this fact of Ham happening to see his father's nakedness, and mentioning it to Shem and Japhet was the reason why his offspring who were certainly not guilty, were destined to thousands of years of servitude, bondage and degradation.

If Ham committed a fault it would seem natural justice to punish *him* and not his offspring. And it would appear that Noah's getting so drunk and cursing his grandchild was a much greater offense than for Ham, accidentally or otherwise, to have discovered his father's nakedness. But according to the Bible, Divine justice has time and again been so different from human justice that it is very natural for us to conclude it means to punish one class for what another class had done. It seems cruel that Canaan's offspring had to be cursed with the worst slavery the world has known because the grandfather Ham committed a trivial offense.

If Noah had remained sober and kept his garments on the poor Africans, (who are said to be the children of Ham,) would have been spared the servitude and ignominy which have been their fate for thousands of years while the descendents of two of Noah's sons were constituted their masters—a strong illustration, indeed, of the evil of intemperance.

After the flood, it seems men decreased in longevi-

ty. Before the flood they were said to have lived eight or nine hundred years, and one man nearly a thousand. After the flood their lives materially shortened, averaging two or three hundred years, and gradually lessening until Abraham's time, after which they seemed not to live much longer than people do now. Whether this was in consequence of the miasma which resulted from the stagnation that succeeded the evaporation of such a body of water, and the consequent decomposition of dead vegetable and animal matter upon the surface of the earth, the story does not tell us, though we may well suppose it was very considerable, and well calculated to engender disease and to shorten life.

In the examination we make of the book which millions revere as the "Word of God" we cannot expect to notice every part of it, or to call attention to all the cases of error and imperfection it contains. This would be a more elaborate work than we propose for ourself. Our purpose is, to call attention to a part only of the impossibilities and absurdities with which the book abounds, and to show it is unworthy the high veneration accorded it. We dwelt longer upon the account of the deluge than we can upon corresponding portions of the book, because it is an important part of the story upon which the Christian religion is founded and because it is so replete with the grossest untruth. We think we have shown the improbality of such an event having occurred.

1. Because it makes God destroy his own work, not only in the human and animal world, but the vegetable domain as well, necessitating an entire new creation of every tree, shrub, herb, plant and blade of grass,

No variety of vegetable life could have survived such a drowning process.

2. Because such a vast amount of water as would cover the earth over 29,000 feet deep could not be produced, and does not exist in connection with this planet.

3. If the earth was so submerged, such a quantity of water could never be disposed of nor taken up in the air by evaporation, nor be retained there.

4. Because it would be utterly impossible for four men to gather all the varieties of animal life which exist on the earth, with the almost endless kinds of food necessary to sustain them.

5. Because the animals, wild and tame, the birds, reptiles and insects from the torrid, temperate and frigid zones, could not long exist together under the same conditions; and some would inevitably become the prey of others.

6. Because the ark of the dimensions given, could not possibly contain such an aggregation of animal life, together with the food necessary to sustain it for a year.

7. Because 300,000 individual existences could not live, for one day even, In such an ark made air-tight by being pitched, without and within, with one small window, only.

8. Because Noah and his sons could not attend to such an aggregation of animal life, keeping them from destroying or injuring each other, giving them their necessary food, and removing the filth which accumulated.

9. Because, at the elevation of 17,000 feet, where the ark is said to have rested, it is far above the line of perpetual frost, where the cold is always so in-

tense that thousands of the varieties of the tenderer animals must have perished before they could reach the milder regions below, where they could live.

10. Because of the utter inutility of the whole scheme in order to destroy the human race, when the new world had to be re-peopled by a seed of the same cursed race that was drowned, and the new class proved themselves to be equally as bad in every respect as the one which so much pains was taken to destroy.

We care not to repeat the arguments heretofore used, nor to call attention to the scores of impossibilities and absurdities connected with the story; and with the conviction that the narration abounds with so much that is unworthy the character of God, so much that is impossible, so much that a rational person connot really and intelligently believe, we will bid adieu to the subject.

Admitting there are parts of the Bible that contain grand thoughts and elevated ideas, that some of it is poetical and more or less inspired, if you please—in the sense that poets and orators are inspired in these days—that good morals are inculcated in its pages, the greater portion of it is a mere recital of the wars of the Jews and other nations, the intrigues and cruelties of kings, the perfidy, wantonness and immorality of individuals, and the base and criminal conduct of many of its most noted heroes.

The language is often of so low a character, descending frequently to the vulgar and obscene, narrating not only the commonest affairs of life, the contentions and conflicts, the amours and courtships, the marriages and adulteries, the debaucheries and ex-

cesses of a semi-barbarous people in a crude age of the world, that we wonder how sensible, intellectual people in the present age, can accept it as the word of God.

The series of recitals in the book show no superior ability in language or thought that is not equalled by thousands of our own time. It was written by different persons, and at different times; but by whom and when, is now unknown. Whether they were truthful and reliable, we have no means of knowing. Whoever they were, they evidently did not themselves think they were writing for God, or that he was directing them, and in very few cases in the whole compilation, is any such claim set up. With the exception of the prophets, it is not pretended by the writers of the book, that they wrote by divine inspiration. The most of its sacred character has been accorded to it by compilers, translators and numberless priests who have subsisted upon the people, by teaching the doctrines of the book, and declaring it to be the word of God.

Many of the writers of the Bible have much to say of God, of his holding conversation with various individuals, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David and many others; but they represent him in such an unfavorable light, and give him so bad a character, we cannot think they did him justice, or that the God they picture is the Deity that governs the Universe and fills immensity. They charge him with incentives, motives, and impulses so inferior to those we conceive should emanate from Deity, that we cannot accept them as authorities as to his character and nature, but rather as slanderers and vilifiers, making him a being, passionate, fickle, changeable, malicious,

unjust and cruel; delighting in, and directing wars, bloodshed, and the wholesale destruction of mankind. In short, they make him such a blood-thirsty monster that we cannot regard the being they hold up, as the kind Father of all, filled with goodness, benignity and love. We think those authors the crude writers of a crude age; that their conceptions and imaginations were of a crude character, not adapted to the present needs of mankind. They were ignorant of many of the important truths connected with our existence which are now better understood by children.

We cannot look to them as teachers in any of the sciences, such as astronomy, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, geometry, mathematics, natural history, natural philosophy, etc., for they knew nothing of them. Why should we, then, take them any more readily as teachers of divinity, or of divine will, purposes and actions? Their ideas of God were most imperfect and crude. They believed him to be a person with body, face and hands like a man. His passions, impulses and desires, were also much the same as man's. They had no idea of any world but this, and they necessarily believed him confined to this one sphere. Now, by the revelations of science, we have some knowledge of the immensity of the Universe; we have learned there are vast numbers of worlds larger than this, many of them so remote as to require the light of our sun—which travels at the rate of 200,000 miles per second—thousands of years to reach them. As far again beyond the remotest spheres which the most powerful telescopes bring to view, we may well suppose the Universe still extends; yes, that it goes on and on, forever—an endless, limitless extent, filled with revolving worlds or matter in some form, for

Nature has no limit and no vacuum. In no part of this endless expanse can we conceive there is an absence of matter. In all these immense distances—farther than the mind can conceive—and in all directions, we must understand the same Deity exists there, that exists here. He is as limitless as the Universe. How absurd, then, to ascribe to him a body, face and hands, and make him to occupy a single point in the Universe, sitting upon a throne somewhere above the clouds, giving his attention to the affairs of this small world only. Mankind are gradually emerging from the dark and narrow teachings of the past, and as their knowledge increases, their minds expand and their conceptions of Deity enlarge. They regard him as the soul of the Universe, the source of life, motion and existence, which always was and always will be. They cannot regard him as a circumscribed, local person, having size, organs and parts like a man, and possessing such mental imperfections and monstrosities as the Jewish writers ascribed to their God. Mankind will become more and more convinced that the promiscuous writings which compose the Bible, are valuable only as mementos of the past; only imperfect accounts of events that occurred a few thousand years ago, and not as teachers to us of science, theology, or divinity.

In the examination of the Bible, we are equally struck with the impossibility of many of the events narrated, and the culpable, immoral conduct of many of its distinguished characters and heroes, who are held up as the special servants of God and in his particular confidence and favor. We shall from time to time, call attention to some of these instances, to see if they are really worthy the belief and veneration of mankind.

The Plagues of Egypt.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

To avoid polixity and a tedious review of the improbable and impossible stories in the book Christians regard as the "word of God," we will omit a detailed enumeration of the hundreds of instances that, in the light of modern science, appear to us extremely improbable, and will call attention to some of the narratives only, the belief of which involves the necessity of God's acting in opposition to himself, and setting aside the laws he had established for the government of the Universe. It is easier to think errors were made in these narrations, and that they were penned by mistaken or untruthful persons, than to imagine God could be engaged in making such statements, either by writing them himself or dictating them to others to write. It is easier to realize that these "big stories" have come down to us from an age of ignorance, mysticism and fable, than that Deity ever was engaged in setting his own laws aside even for a moment. We can understand they were written in an age of the world when nothing more

was actually known of God than we know now, but when it was claimed more was known, and that he talked with certain ones face to face, as one man talks with another. But the assertion does not make it so. We have no reason to believe such an event has ever taken place. God, as a being, has never been seen with man's eyes, or heard with man's ears, and assertions that he has must be taken with the greatest distrust.

In establishing many of the religions of the world in former ages, it seems to have been a very usual thing with the founders of them, and of those who detailed accounts of them, to relate very extraordinary statements of their gods and the works they per formed, believing undoubtedly the more remarkable the statements they gave, the more wonder and credulity would be awakened. With this motive, many recitals of what have been called *miracles* were doubtless made in that age of the world when even its most reliable history was greatly blended with fable, mysticism and untruth.

Of this character are the narratives of the plagues which the Lord is said to have brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the marvelous events connected with the departure of the Jews from Egypt; commencing with the rod of Moses and Aaron changing into a serpent and swallowing all the serpents which Pharaoh's magicians produced, and followed by the stretching forth of the same rod and turning the rivers, ponds and pools of Egypt (including the river Nile,) into blood, and killing all the fish therein contained. If all the water in Egypt was turned into blood, and if the people could not drink it, the question very naturally arises, how could they live? In

this age of the world a few day's deprivation of water causes death. Such statements as the foregoing made in these days, would be termed "snake stories" and "fish stories," and never be believed.

It seems the Lord wished Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, and yet he hardened his heart and prevented their going, for the purpose of showing his mighty power and skill. Such conduct in man would appear inconsistent, if not extremely foolish, but as it is *reported* of God, we must believe it and doubt not a word of it. The snakes and blood and dead fish failing to overcome the hardness of heart which God brought upon Pharaoh, Aaron, at the command of God and his brother Moses, stretched forth his rod, and the land became completely overrun with frogs, filling the fields, houses, chambers, beds, ovens and kneading troughs. It must have been a pretty good time for the frogs, to say the least; and God must have produced them on that occasion by a process unlike any used before or since. Now, frogs grow gradually from tadpoles, hatched from frogs' eggs. Can we believe Nature or God ever produced them in any other manner, when "he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever"?

It is noticeable that Pharaoh's magicians were fully able to change rods into snakes, and water into blood with all the facility that Moses and Aaron did, but when they came to the frog trick, they were unequal to that, and were compelled to own themselves vanquished. It would seem to an ordinary mind about as much of a feat to make snakes of twigs, and to convert water into blood, as to produce frogs, and decidedly a greater exhibition of power than any magician or wonder-worker in this age of the world can

accomplish with all the advance that has been made in science and learning. The most that magicians can do now, is to deceive the eye, and *appear* to do what they really do not do, and it is extremely doubtful if they had more skill in olden times. No man now living can convert rods into snakes, and there is no reason to suppose a man ever lived who could do it. Neither does the oft-quoted phrase, "all things are possible with God," make it any more probable.

Such a vast multitude of frogs was rather too much for Pharaoh, and he importuned Moses to kill them off, and it is not strange a bad stench should pervade the land as they decomposed in the sun. As soon, however, as Pharaoh saw the frogs were dead, his heart became hardened again, and God proceeded to show his power in other ways, in the further attempt to overcome the hardness of heart he had brought upon the ki g. Aaron again stretched forth that wonderful rod, and all the dust of Egypt became lice, and they spread completely over man and beast in all the land, but proved as unavailing as the previous inflictions. Swarms of flies next came in enormous quantities. Pharaoh's heart softened under these evils, but the Lord hardened it again as soon as they were removed, and he would not "let the people go," and other plagues and torments were sent. Next, murrain came upon the cattle, killing every head owned by the Egyptians, and touching not one that belonged to the Jews. It is not so in this age of the world; the cattle of those who consider themselves saints are just as liable to be attacked with disease as those belonging to the wicked. Killing the cattle was unavailing, and boils and pestilence were next sent over the land, and Moses stretched his rod toward

heaven, and the "Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran along the ground." Fire and hail were mingled together, killing men and beasts all over the land. We submit it was a trifle cruel, after all the cattle had been killed with murrain, to kill them again the next day with thunder, lightning and hail. It was bad enough, in all conscience, to kill the poor creatures *once*, without repeating the operation time after time, and day after day, and all for committing no offense at all themselves.

It is said, also, the hail smote every herb of the field, and also broke down the trees, and it is not strange that Pharaoh cried out to have all this cease; but the Lord hardened his heart again, and he next resorted to locusts. He sent an East wind, which brought locusts in such immense quantities as to fill the land, "cover the face of the whole earth," and darken the air. They eat every herb of the field and all the fruits of the trees. It may be supposed it was rather "dry picking" for the locusts after the hail storm which killed cattle, broke down the trees and beat every shrub and plant into the earth, and it is hard to say how they could do much harm any way, in eating of the debris that might be found here and there, sticking up out of the ground. But still Pharaoh regarded the locusts as a great affliction.

He was again softened by these God-like visitations, and called upon Moses and Aaron in haste to implore the Lord to send the locusts away, which he did by changing the wind and causing it to blow from the West. In a short time there was not a locust in all the land.

Then the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart again, and he was no better than before—he still would not

let Moses and the people go. Next a *thick* darkness was spread over the land, which lasted three days. It was so thick and dense it could be felt, and there was no sunlight at all. What became of the sun during those three days we are not told. Can it be possible it remained on the other side of the globe, or rather that the earth did not revolve for that length of time? The darkness on that occasion was of such a peculiar character, that it seemed to have substance, and could be felt like water, or snow or sand. We now know that darkness is negative only, a simple absence of light; that it has no substance and cannot possibly be felt, weighed nor measured—in other words, it is *nothing*. The person who wrote this story was evidently under the false impression that darkness is a matter—an entity—that can be spread over a country like rain or hail, and perhaps be sliced up with a knife. The most obtuse can see the absurdity of this. Darkness like that in Egypt was never seen before nor since.

Pharaoh again cried out to Moses to get out of the country, he and all his people; but it was of no use, the Lord hardened his heart again, that he might have further opportunity of showing his power, and he caused Pharaoh to still hold the Israelites. The next thing done was to destroy all the first-born in the land. "And it came to pass at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle." This is the third time these poor cattle were killed. This, indeed, made a sad time in Egypt. Pharaoh was up in the night, as well as all the Egyptians, and they made a great cry, for

there was not a house in the land in which there was not one dead.

This time the king called upon Moses more earnestly than ever, to get out of the country, and take all the flocks and herds that belonged to him and his people. Moses took him at his word, and, before the Lord had time to harden Pharaoh's heart again, and in one day's time, Moses and 600,000 of the Israelites packed up all their goods, and with their flocks and herds got out of the country, though not until they had borrowed of the Egyptians all their jewels of gold and silver, and all their best raiment.

In all the annals of the world, 600,000 people never before effected such rapid movements, as to pack up all they possessed and get out of the country at so short a notice. But it must have been so, for the book says "the self-same day the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

Infidels and skeptics may wonder how God, who is alike Father of all nations, should authorize the Israelites to dishonestly take the gold and silver jewels of the Egyptians, as well as all their fine wearing apparel; but Christians can easily understand it, for their system is founded upon ethics of partiality and favoritism, some being blessed and made happy, while others are damned and made wretched.

To an ordinary "wicked" person, it would seem that if the Lord really wanted the children of Israel to get out of Egypt, he was unnecessarily cruel, in retarding the business by hardening Pharaoh's heart so often, and making it necessary to afflict a people innocent at least of Pharaoh's obduracy, with so many dire calamities, to say nothing of the cattle so often killed. It would have saved an untold amount of suf-

fering and distress if he had not hardened Pharaoh's heart so often, and had let him act out his natural disposition. But as God seemed to want an opportunity to show his power in sending plagues and afflictions, perhaps we ought to think it was all kindness and love on his part to do just as he did. If the Egyptians *were* equally his children with the Jews, it perhaps follows that he should afflict them, kill their cattle, and put them to death, if he saw fit to do so We are told that "God's ways are not as man's ways," and that they are "past finding out." All we have to do is to "*have faith*," and to believe every word the book and the good clergy tell us; for, "to doubt is to be damned."

For ourselves, however, we shall exercise the liberty of doubting the entire narrative, and not only believe that the Universal Father never performed any of these cruelties, but that he never wrote them, nor caused any one else to write them; and we rejoice that the intelligent people of the world are getting their eyes open to the absurdity of believing that such silly stories are the words of God. If such tales were told of the present time, none could be found to believe them, and they are no truer for having been handed down from an age when the best historical accounts were greatly blended with fable and exaggeration, and when men falsely claimed to converse with God face to face. We believe none converse with Deity now, but they do just as much as was ever done. All can see him alike, and it is idle for men to claim that they have special favors in this respect.

Korah, Datham and Abiram.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

In looking over the Bible narratives, we find many wonderful stories, and many instances where the Lord became angry and committed great slaughter and devastation among his chosen people. We will here instance the one of the insurrection of Korah, Datham and Abiram, who, tiring of the protracted journey through the wilderness, and at the dictatorial and imperious rule of Moses, incited a mutiny in the camp, and induced some two hundred and fifty others to join them in demonstrations of opposition to the tyranny of Moses. When Moses learned this, he became very much excited and fell in anger to the earth. It may be supposed he had something like an apoplectic or a cateleptic fit. He appointed a meeting on the following day. When it occurred, Moses again became very angry and filled with wrath. It is probable he had another attack of vertigo, or pressure of blood to the head. He held a short conversation with the Lord, in which he enjoined that kind being to respect not the offerings of the mutineers.

After separating the faithful from the unfaithful, and after the amiable Moses had spoken a few words to the assembly, the "ground clave assunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods." They all went down into the pit together, when the earth closed again over them, and, as a matter of course, they "utterly perished." "And there," also, it is said, "came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

These were heroic measures, truly. The offense in the eyes of Moses and the Lord, (they seemed, indeed, to have a good understanding in the matter,) was of an alarming character, and they seemed to be very angry about it. That probably explains the terrible character of the punishment inflicted. This must have been an aggravated case, for Moses and the Lord were both angry. It was customary for Moses to hold his temper when the Lord became angry, and often, when the latter had it in his heart to destroy his people *utterly,* and to wipe them from the face of the earth, Moses, by his persuasive style of reasoning, showed the Lord the foolishness of such conduct, and how the surrounding nations would laugh at him; how, after he had put himself to so much trouble to bring his people out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea on dry land, and to keep them so many years alive with manna sent daily from heaven, it would be rash and foolish, on his part, to thus destroy them; and we learn by the book that "Moses would not let the Lord destroy Israel."

It was truly fortunate for the Israelites and their

posterity, that on most occasions Moses was able to hold his temper and remain placid when the Lord became so enraged with anger and wrath, and thus be able to hold a check upon the Lord, and prevent him, on many occasions, from playing "general smash" with his people. But in the case under consideration, where *his own* rule and authority were opposed, his wrath, also, waxed extremely hot; he was not disposed to hold the Lord back at all, and the only wonder is that a few hundred only were destroyed, when the aid of both earthquakes and heavenly fire were invoked. If the earth opened its mouth and took that number in, why not open it wider, while about it, and take a large mouthful? When this fire from the Lord was loose among the congregation and consumed them, why stop at two hundred and fifty? It must be attributed to the possibility that on this occasion the Lord was, fortunately not so angry as Moses was; the revolt was more particularly against Moses than against God, hence, perhaps, the comparative small destruction of life.

"But on the morrow, all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying: 'ye have killed the people of the Lord!' and it came to pass when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared." This appearance of God's glory portended mischief, and it is to be inferred he was much more angry than on the previous day; for the destruction of life was immensely greater. The Lord spoke to Moses and notified him to get out from among the congregation, that he might consume them

all in a moment. This time his anger was, doubtless, raised to fever heat; for a fire or plague, (the account is not very clear in stating which it was,) went out from the Lord, and slew immediately, fourteen thousand and seven hundred persons.

The destruction of life on this occasion would, in all probability, have been much greater had not Moses been a little cooler-headed than on the previous day. He saw in a moment that the Lord meant business, and by a simple device—the sending of Aaron with a censor containing incense and fire, to go out among the congregation and make atonement for the people, great destruction was averted. The inference is, when the fumes or odor of this burning incense reached the olfactories of the Lord, it immediately pacified his anger and checked the destruction of life; for when Aaron thus "stood between the dead and living, the plague was stayed." But for this timely device of Moses, there is no telling to what extent the work of destruction might have gone. It might have reached the number of fifty thousand, or seventy thousand, as it did on other occasions when the Lord became enraged and no one stepped in to hold him back. As it was, the people, doubtless, could not feel very grateful for his visit; and if the "glory" which was seen at that time over the tabernacle portended the destruction of near fifteen thousand people, they, doubtless, wished it would not present itself there very often. A funeral of fifteen thousand, at one time, was probably more extensive than agreeable.

These stories of the Lord's becoming angry and slaying his people in this wholesale manner, is very derogatory to the character of a first-class deity, and

belittles and vilifies the Supreme Power that pervades the Universe. It seems almost blasphemous and sacrilegious to charge a God of love—a beneficient Providence with such extreme cruelty, malice and vindictiveness. It is more fitted to the character of a demon ; and no devil nor demon is known at the present time who would be guilty of such conduct. The usual argument that "God made the people, and had a right to do what he pleased with them," fails to rationalize such conduct No reasonable God would allow himself to fly into fits of rage and anger and slay indiscriminately fifteen to seventy thousand persons at one time for the offense of an individual, and who, too, was permitted to go without punishment himself.

These stories about God's getting angry and becoming so malicious, so blood-thirsty and destructive, that he caused the earth to open its mouth, swallow up a body of its people, and then close its mouth again, partakes so much of the character of the fables, exaggerations and fictions of a barbarous age, that we cannot accept them as truth, far less as having been written or dictated by God. In fact, we cannot believe them at all. We see nothing of this kind occurring now. We sometimes have shocks of an earthquake, houses are thrown down, and, in some instances, cracks or fissures occur ; but we understand now that these are all the results of natural causes and conditions, and that the earth never opens its mouth like a huge beast and closes it again, taking in at a gulp, large numbers of people. The same ever-pervading laws that govern the Universe to-day, governed it four thousand years ago, and four hundred thousand years as well, and these laws, or this Supreme Power, if you choose to so denominate it, is un-

changeable in character; it does not "get mad," it does not fly into a rage; it is not malicious; it is not vindictive; it is not destructive, and all stories and fables accusing it of these monstrosities are utterly unworthy of belief.

The Truth Seeker Tracts.

If you want terse, trenchant reading matter, to act as "Eye-openers," in doing "Missionary Work," convenient to hand to neighbors, friends and all enquiring persons, send for a supply of these valuable little evangels of truth.

They range in price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount is made to those purchasing in quantities. They are so low in price, that thousands of generous-hearted persons can afford to buy them for gratuitous distribution. Too many of them cannot be spread broadcast over our land. Sent, post-paid, by mail.

Published by D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS,

Containing two pages each of terse, trenchant reading matter, without redundancy.

Price by mail, 4 cts. per doz.; 25 cts. per hundred; $2.00 per thousand.

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

BALAAM AND HIS ASS.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the many "big stories" with which the Bible abounds may be included that of Balaam and his ass (or his jennet, for it was a female ass), and the conversation she held with her master. This is the only instance in the whole history of the world, including the animal kingdom, of an ass speaking human language. Asses and mules have a language of their own, if the noise they make may be dignified with that title, but while it is very sonorous, it is not regarded as being musical or possesing much variation. Neither has it been regarded as exhibiting special intelligence.

The formation of sounds constituting human language requires a peculiar set of organs, which alone are found in man, and hence it is an utter impossibility for horses, cattle, dogs, and all other kinds of animals to make the various sounds and connect them together, which constitute a human language, and no amount of education or practice on the part of animals can overcome this difficulty. Parrots are

about the only exception to the rule; they have the faculty of imitating various sounds. and can be taught to articulate words and thus imitate human speech. So, asses, though they have no deficiency of lung power, are lacking in the essential organs for modulating and connecting sounds, and they will never be able to utter human language. Our remarks apply only to four-legged asses; there are many of the two-legged kind that not only possess the organs of speech, but use them, also, to such extent that many who have been compelled to listen to their braying, have heartily wished they conld talk no better than their four-legged namesakes.

Æsop, who lived some four thousand years ago, and who taught excellent moral lessons by means of fables, often represented asses, lions, cattle, dogs, and other animals and birds as using human speech, and he often caused them to utter sound sense and wisdom. He knew, however, his readers would understand his recitals were mere fables, and that no one would for a moment think those animals really talked.

Charles Dickens, of our own time, used to draw largely upon his imagination in the stories he wrote. If he did not say that animals used human speech, in his fancy he converted the merest shadows, articles of furniture, andirons, shovels and tongs and various other household goods into human beings, and made them talk, and often with excellent sense too; but after all, he knew nobody would believe these were really human beings, or that they used human speech, but that they would understand in a moment, that he was only letting his fancy have a little innocent play for a specific purpose.

How often have many of us in our childhood days

witnessed the effects of imagination, when alone in the dark, either out of doors or within; how, impelled by fear, trees, stumps, posts and other objects assumed human shape; the slightest movement of a limb would fill our imagination with ghosts and hobgoblins, and in the sighing of the wind through cracks and crevices often we heard human voices. As we arrived at years of discretion, however, these fancies took their flight, having no more existence, in fact, than "the baseless fabric of a dream."

This Bible story differs from all these. This is given us as a *bona fide* fact, and priests tell us it is divine truth, penned even by the hand of God himself, and must be believed. Let us look at it a moment and see if it appears probable. That which is divine ought at least to possess probability. No one knows who wrote the account. Our Christian friends attribute it to Moses, but they have not the slightest authority for doing so, and even if he did write it, we cannot see why we should believe him, as he was not present to know the events he was writing about. This total uncertainty as to who wrote the story is quite sufficient, with the improbability of its truth, to excite our strongest suspicions as to its fabulous character.

It seems while the Israelites were journeying towards the land of Canaan, they came in among other nations and tribes of people, who, from the aggressive character of the Israelites feared and dreaded them. Balak, king of the Moabites, was greatly annoyed by their presence, and wished to gain some advantage over them, and for this purpose sent some of his princes to Balaam, a prophet of Midian, to come over and curse the Israelites for his benefit.

Balaam did not belong to God's chosen people, but nevertheless seemed to be on very good terms with him, and held direct conversation with him. When the king of Moab sent for Balaam, God went to him and asked him what those men wanted. Balaam, like an honest man, told God the facts in the case, that Balak wanted him to go over and give Israel a good cursing. Then God told Balaam he should not go, neither should he curse his people, for they were blessed. So Balaam, the next morning, sent word to Balak that he could not go over.

Upon receiving this intelligence, Balak sent over more princes of a still higher grade and urged Balaam still more strongly to come over, offering to confer great honors upon him if he would come. Balaam however was unmoved and replied, if Balak would give him a house full of gold and silver, he would do and say no more than God authorized. He, however, begged the messengers to wait over night, that he might see God again and have another conversation with him upon the subject. God held another interview with Balaam that night and he told him to go with the men when he arose in the morning, and that he would be there and direct him in what he should say and do. So in the morning, in accordance with God's instructions, Balaam saddled his ass and went with the princes of Moab. But here we have another instance of God's fickle and changeable character; though he had just a few hours before told Balaam to go, yet no sooner had he, the Prophet, yielded to these instructions, and while he was even on his way, God's anger was kindled very suddenly, and he became greatly incensed toward Balaam for doing just what he told him to do, and he had one of his an-

gels stand in the road for an adversary, so as to prevent Balaam and his two servants from passing. This disagreeable habit of flying into a passion upon the most trifling provocation, as so often narrated in the Bible, which troubled God so frequently, was one which cannot be recommended for human beings to imitate. It is far better, under all circumstances, to keep cool and unruffled.

There was one fact connected with this affair which seems singular. Although Balaam appeared to be a man remarkably favored of God, and had several interviews and conversations with him, yet he was far inferior to his ass in spiritual discernment. She saw the angel, but her master could not. That was truly a remarkable ass; she could not only talk, but could see spirits. She must have been a "medium." She seems, however, to have been afraid of the angel, for when she saw it, she turned out of the road and went into the fields. It was Balaam's turn to get angry now, and he struck Jenny to turn her back into the road; but as Balaam and the ass were passing close to a vineyard wall, the angel appeared again before the ass and caused her to shie up to the wall and crush Balaam's foot, when, in a rage, he beat her again. Farther on, in a very narrow pass, where there was barely room for the ass, the angel again placed himself before her, and as she could neither turn to the right nor to the left, she fell down, and probably Balaam fell off, for now he got very angry again and smote the ass with a staff. At this juncture God interfered and opened Jenny's mouth, and she talked and asked her master what she had done to cause him to beat her these three times. Balaam did not seem at all surprised to hear his ass talk thus, and simply

replied that he had beat her because she had mocked him, and regretted that he had not a sword with him that he might kill her at once. The ass then asked him if she was not his ass, and whether she had ever misbehaved before, and he acknowledged she had not. Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he too saw the angel with a sword in his hand, and he immediately fell on his face. The angel put him through a short catechism and reproved him for his conduct. He also told Balaam if the ass had not turned out of the way as she did, he (the angel) would have slain Balaam and kept the ass alive. Balaam, fearing he had been doing wrong, proposed to turn back and not pursue his journey farther, but the angel told him to go on with the men.

Now this is all a singular story. That God should interest himself so greatly in a matter of no more apparent consequence; that he should hold conversations with Balaam, and talk to him as one man would talk to another, is entirely different from what he does now-a-days. Then his being under the necessity of asking Balaam what the men wanted, seems a little odd. God, who knows everything, would not seem to be under the necessity of doing this. What great difference could it make whether Balaam cursed Israel or not? If God had blessed him and did not want curses should fall upon him, could he not do just as he pleased about it? Then after conferring with Balaam and telling him to go, it seems weak in him, that he should fly in a passion at him for going. A man with merely a small allowance of reason, would hardly act so absurdly; but the Bible makes God to get very angry on a great many occasions on the slightest provocation, and to do many things

which a man with half sense would be ashamed of. Then obstructing the way so the ass could not get along, causing her to be beat three times, and crushing Balaam's foot, really seems like "small business" for God to be engaged in, especially with no greater apparent reason. The story says he made the ass to talk, and as it was probably the only time that such a beast ever did talk, it would seem she ought to have uttered something more important. All she said was to ask Balaam what he whipped her for, and whether she had not always served him faithfully?

As it was so easy for God and Balaam to converse together, it appears wholly unnecessary for God to perform such a miracle, to make a beast speak which had no organs of speech, merely to ask two or three simple, unimportant questions. God does not do such things now, but the priests tell us his ways are mysterious and past finding out. Nothing seems to have been gained by all this trouble and detention; for Balaam was told to go on according to the programme laid out. When he met Balak, he had the latter build in all, twenty-one altars, and offer on each an ox and a ram to get God in a good humor, so that he might put into his mouth what he should say, but blessings on the Israelites where Balak wanted cursings, was all that came of it. This shows one thing, that building altars and offering oxen and sheep to the Lord, to produce a favorable influence, was not peculiar to the Israelites, for the heathen around them had the same fashion. We also see that heathen prophets had access to God, and talked with him the same as the most favored of God's people.

The question that naturally arises: why did God open the ass' mouth and give it human speech? Was

it because Balaam had beat her? If it was for that reason, why does he not now open the mouths of asses, horses, mules, oxen and brutes of all kinds when they are whipped, and so cruelly abused by hard-hearted man? If he did not give Jenny human speech for that purpose, what in the world was it for? Did he get before her to cause her to shie and crush Balaam's foot that he might beat her, that her mouth might be opened and she ask Balaam why he did thus? The conundrum is too great, we give it up; the mystery is too deep; we will not try to fathom it.

Balaam seems to have been a good sort of man and doubtless tried to do as God wanted him to do, but nevertheless, in a short time after this he was cruelly murdered with the five kings of Midian, and all the men of the nation, at the time God authorized Moses to send twelve thousand men to utterly destroy them, and devastate the country.

There are a good many points in this story we would like to notice, but we will have to let them pass. Our article is already too lengthy. In closing we will just say, we are willing anybody should believe this story who wants to. For our part we think it is altogether too silly and childish, to believe for a moment that the Deity that rules all worlds and pervades every particle of matter in the Universe, either ever had anything to do in the asinine events here narrated, or in writing or dictating such a senseless, preposterous story.

Arraignment of Priestcraft.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

As far back in the ages of antiquity, as we have any account of the human race, we find there has been a class of men who have claimed peculiar privileges, have assumed authority over their fellow-men; have insisted upon being obeyed and revered; have required support from their more industrious brethren, and have demanded immunity from the menial and laborious avocations of life. They have in all ages claimed to have direct authority from the gods; and they have assumed that they were delegated and commissioned by these gods to proclaim to their fellow-men what was required of them, and they have professed to have more influence with these mysterious deities than all the world besides.

They have in fact been the inventors and manufacturers of gods; mankind has known little or nothing relative to these gods save what this privileged aristocracy have told them. They have managed the busi-

ness so adroitly that they have maintained great and almost supreme control over the minds and bodies of their fellow-men, and by threats, invectives, and denunciations have succeeded marvelously in keeping the human race in an abject condition of ignorance, terror, and slavery.

It has been their object and aim to hold the masses in ignorance, to discountenance investigation and inquiry, and they have assumed the right to tell their fellow-men all they needed to know about the gods in heaven, as well as demons in hell. They have virtually said to their dupes: "It is unnecessary for you to approach the gods, or have intercourse with them, we will act for you, and will say to the gods all that needs to be said, and will proclaim to you their will and commands, and this is all you need to know. For these disinterested services on our part, we claim of you in return, implicit obedience, unquestioning submission, and devout veneration, and we modestly demand that you give us the first fruits of your fields, the fattest of your flocks, the finest of your linens, silks, wools and furs, for ourselves and our families. We, of course, expect you to be unstinted in your donations, and that you will look to us as your mediators, your law-givers, your guides and rulers. Remember, we demand humble submission on your part to all our claims ; and failing in this, the curses of the gods and the judgments of heaven will be hurled upon you."

This privileged class of which we are speaking, have been known in the world as *Priests*, though other appellations have frequently been applied to them ; sometimes Fakirs, sometimes Oracles, sometimes Dervises, sometimes Seers and Prophets, sometimes

Monks and Friars, sometimes Fathers and Elders, sometimes Bishops and Prelates, and sometimes Cardinals and Popes. In modern times they have been termed Ministers, Preachers, Pastors, Clergymen, Reverends, and Divines. They have been numerous in all systems of religion, and in all varieties of belief. Of the three thousand different creeds inflicted upon the human family, all have had their Priests—their "holy men"—men who have professed to know all about God and the unknown world, and have assumed to impart this knowledge to their credulous followers.

They have in all ages been a non-producing class; who have neither cultivated the earth nor tended the flocks. They have always lived upon the labor and toil of others, and have absolutely been dead weights and "dead beats" in the society of the world, feeding upon the best the earth afforded, and scarcely lifting a finger to produce a peck of wheat, a measure of corn, a pint of beans or a hill of potatoes.

They have not only originated the thousands of different gods believed in, in all ages of the world, but as many systems of religion with which humanity has been cursed. Nor is this the least evil they have inflicted on the race; they have been the inciters of dissensions, the promoters of discord, the instigators of persecutions, and in thousands of cases the prime movers in wars, carnage, and bloodshed. They have evinced the most cruel, merciless, blood-thirsty and fiendish traits ever known in human character. They have committed and caused to be committed murders without number, both in public and private. They have instigated, in their plenitude of priestly power, the most bloody and devastating wars the world has

known, and have caused rivers, yes, oceans of human blood to be spilled, sparing neither the helpless mother nor her sucking infant.

As great a curse as king-craft has been to the human race, priestcraft has been a thousand times greater. True, kings have subdued nations, devastated populous and happy countries, destroyed the labors and wealth of many people, rolled back for centuries the wheels of progress and civilization, and have drenched the earth in human blood ; but Priests have done all this and more. They have incited kings and tyrants to the wars and slaughters they have committed ; they have inflamed the passions of the ignorant masses, and led them on in the work of carnage, bloodshed and death. They have instigated not only the most needless and cruel wars of which we have any account, but the most fiendish massacres, assassinations, and murders that have ever been committed.

Who, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries instigated the wars of the Crusades against the Mohammedans of the East, the Moors of Spain, the Waldenses and Hugenots of France, and the Albigenses of Piedmont, by which millions of human beings were slain, and human blood enough spilled to float all the ships of the world ? It was *Priests*, and in their interests was the whole demoniac, bloody work prosecuted.

Who was it in the thirteenth century instituted and conducted the infernal Inquisition for the trial and punishment of Heretics, which was kept up for five hundred years, and before which hellish court were dragged, at all hours of the day and night, countless numbers of innocent, defenceless persons, and where by unutterable cruelties of the rack, the wheel, pinchers, thumb-screws, the fagot and fire and nameless

other diabolical inventions, they were made to confess crimes they never committed, and when, without a chance of making a defence, or of confronting their accusers, hundreds of thousands of these hapless, helpless mortals were forced out of the world by the infliction of the most terrible tortures of which the mind can conceive? It was PRIESTS—men who claimed to be holier than other men, and to be the mediators between God and man.

Who, in the sixteenth century deluged the Netherlands in human gore, and in shameless reference to those abominable persecutions that incarnate fiend of the Romish Church, Alva, boasted of having personally caused the death of thirty-six thousand defenceless men and women to say nothing of the burnings, roastings, slaughters, and assassinations of numerous others without even the color of law? It was PRIESTS, ever true to their enmity to the human race.

Who were the authors and instigators of the notorious massacre on St. Bartholomew's day in Paris, in 1572, when forty thousands of innocent people, men, women, and children, were cruelly murdered and during the three succeeding days in other parts of France twenty thousand more of poor unfortunate beings were wantonly assassinated, and for which abominable slaughter, the Pope ordered special thanksgiving to be rendered in his churches and Te Deums and masses to be performed? It was PRIESTS, still true to their historical, bloody character.

Many similar fiendish and inhuman crimes have they been guilty of, both on a large and small scale but we cannot now stop to mention a tithe of them. History, however, is full of such recitals and instances without number can be given if desired.

An English writer upon this subject says: "Three hundred million of human beings have been sacrificed by Christian Priests on the pretext of working for God," and he quotes this passage from Hosia vi. 9, "For as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent."

As many thousands and millions of innocent lives that Priests have been the means of taking without show of reason or justice, as much as they have done toward destroying the peace and quietness of families, communities, and nations, the greatest evil they have done to the world has been in the darkness they have cast over the minds of men and women, and in the clogs and brakes they have fastened upon the wheels of the car of progress, science, and civilization.

Under the divine authority from the gods which they have represented, they have taught and enjoined the most pernicious doctrines. They have made Deity appear to mankind as a cruel, blood-thirsty monster; they have compelled their dupes to accept the most abhorrent creeds and dogmas; they have discouraged and prohibited free thought and free investigation; they have retarded and kept back for thousands of years the advance of science, truth and mental freedom. They have promoted ignorance and opposed education; they have favored tyranny and oppression, and have fought to the bitter end, liberty and civilization. They have dwarfed the human intellect; they have spread and held a pall of darkness and gloom over the entire world, and have obscured the sun of light and truth and progress. They have bound fetters and shackles upon deluded human beings, and doomed them to lives of the most abject slavery. They have claimed to be the best friends of

the human race, but have really been its worst enemies. They have prated much about God and heaven, but their rule and influence have rivaled the worst conceptions of the devil and hell. They have taxed the people of the world to the extent of thousands of millions of dollars—impoverishing individuals, ruining families, and exhausting nations, for the services they claimed to be heavenly and God-inspired, while their conduct has absolutely been of the character of demons incarnate.

Our language to some may seem somewhat extravagant, but it is simply the truth, and we have not uttered a thousandth part of what can be said in perfect keeping with the facts of history. It is our wish to misstate or overstate nothing. The truth, in all conscience, is bad enough, and there is not the slightest necessity for drawing upon the imagination. It is truly an appalling thought to realize the wrongs this class of men have perpetrated upon humanity, and how much they have retarded the progress of the race. When it is remembered how many iniquities and absurdities they have fastened upon the human intellect, it is enough to make the "blood of an honest man boil," and cause him to curse them as the most unmitigated enemies that poor human nature has had to contend with.

If the wealth of which priests have robbed the world; if the exactions they have laid upon mankind; if the time, toil, and effort which they have used in binding upon the minds and consciences of men debasing creeds, degrading dogmas, and worse than useless doctrines, had been used in enlightening mankind, in elevating their views and opinions, in establishing schools of science, of art, and of truth; in promulga-

ting the principles of peace, benevolence and fraternity, what a paradise this priest-ridden world would now be—how infinitely better and happier the human family would be to-day. Why, if we simply had the money that has been paid to these Priests for *forgiving sins*, for *praying souls out of purgatory*, for *performing masses* for the dead, and for *granting indulgences* to their simple dupes to commit immoral conduct, we could build a school-house in every township in the United States, and an asylum for destitute widows and homeless orphans in every county in the land. If we had the hard-earned treasures that have been wrung from the patient and deluded people by these Priests for teaching creeds that are vain, and dogmas that are false, together with the cost of temples, pagodas, mosques, cathedrals, and churches that have been built at their dictation, we could erect a hall of science and education in every town and village in the habitable world—we could reclaim all the waste and swamp lands in the United States—make commodious highways in every neighborhood, and construct railroads and telegraph lines leading to and connecting every city, town, and hamlet.

It may be claimed that Priestcraft presented its worst features in olden times, before the introduction of the Christian religion. This is not so. Though the Jewish Priests were culpable in the extreme, and some of them specimens of depravity in human form, though many of the pagan Priests were ignorant, barbarous, and cruel, it was the Christian priesthood which transcended all others in crimes, depravity, and horror; and if in the last three centuries they have materially improved, it has not arisen from any inherent virtue or goodness within themselves or

their institution, but because the world has advanced in spite of them, and they have been compelled to measurably keep pace with the progress of the age. As we remarked, they opposed science, education, and mental liberty, and persecuted students of learning as long and as effectually as in their power, but by degrees they have been compelled to yield to these civilizing and elevating influences, until now they fain would claim they have all along really been the patrons of science and education. Nothing can be further removed from justness and truth than this claim.

We do not for a moment assert that there have been, and are, no sincere, honest men among the clergy, nor that many are not aiming to do their duty according to their best understanding, and are commendable exceptions to the general rule, but we do claim, they are engaged in teaching falsehoods and errors the world would be better without, and that their influence has been most baneful in the past, and is mischevious and hurtful in the present. They have not made the world moral in the past, and they are not making it moral today. Let mankind be fully educated in the truths of science, and in the superiority of fraternal, human conduct toward their fellow-men, without regard to invisible gods or devils which have no existence in fact, and the world would be vastly more moral than now. They would be fully able to do their own thinking and praying, and have not the slightest use for a pampered, designing, and most expensive Priesthood.

As greatly as the world has improved, as much as the Priesthood have advanced, they really have no superiority in morality and virtue over other men. They surely have an equal greed for gold, an equal

anxiety for applause, as great a desire for power and domain, as much fondness for pleasure, as liable to indulge in passion, and as ready to yield to temptation as any class of men in the world.

They are as artful, as designing, and use as much cunning and finesse in achieving their purposes and in carrying out their plans as any portion of humanity. In yielding to improper influences, in weakness in withstanding the besetments of life, and in their proneness to wrong and culpable conduct, they are not surpassed by any portion of their fellow-men. They claim to be better, holier and purer, but these claims are baseless and false. They have abundantly proved themselves unfit conscience keepers for their fellow men, and that in virtue, morality, and manhood they possess no superiority. Their partiality for tender, yellow-legged chickens and pretty women has passed into a proverb.

Sir Godfrey Higgins, author of "Anacalypsis," and the "Celtic Druids," thus accords to the priesthood their true character: "Of all the evils that escaped from Pandora's box the institution of Priesthoods was the worst. Priests have been the curse of the world. And if we admit the merits of many of those of our own time to be as pre-eminent above all others as the *espirit de corps* of the most self-contented individual of the order may incite him to consider them; great as I am willing to allow the merits of individuals to be, I will not allow that they form exceptions strong enough to destroy the general nature of the rule. Look at China; at the festival of Juggernaut; the Crusades; the massacres of St. Bartholomew; of the Mexicans, and the Peruvians; the fires of the Inquisition; of Mary, Cranmer, Calvin, and of the Druids! Look at

Ireland ; look at Spain; in short look everywhere, and everywhere you will see the priests reeking with gore. They have converted populous and happy nations into deserts; and have transformed our beautiful world into a slaughter-house, drenched with blood and tears."

Many honest persons labor under the mistake that American clergymen are the most moral portion of the community, and that their minds are so absorbed in contemplating heavenly themes and divine commands, that they never do or think anything impure, sensual, or wrong. A greater mistake is not made. A large percentage of them are influenced by base passions and carnal desires. They are found to yield as readily to base influences as any class of men. The main difference between them and other men is, they are more shrewd in concealing their improper conduct and are so familiar with duplicity and hypocritical cant that they are able to put on the most gracious exterior and the most sanctimonious expression of countenance when they have just left a sensual debauch or have accomplished the ruin of some inexperienced maiden or simple-minded sister.

Father John W. Gerdemann, ex-Catholic priest of St. Bonifacius Church in Philadelphia, after renouncing the hypocritical priest-life he had lived for ten years, in a lecture delivered to an immense audience in that city, in the summer of 1875, drew this faithful picture of the false-hearted fraternity he had forsaken.

"I come now to the last great blot on the character of the Roman clergy, which you will allow me to treat in a cursory manner out of respect to the audience I have the honor to address. Priests are not allowed to marry; would to God they were. They are called

Fathers by the people, and unfortunately, with many it is not only a name but a sad reality; not the honored, hallowed name of father, but a name whispering of shame and a broken heart, if not a ruined family. Undoubtedly the young men who are ordained priests are generally pure, sincere and good; but alas! the system of celibacy, at all times the bane of the Catholic ministry, too often ruins them. I spoke to a priest last year about this time, about getting married and leaving the church. He called me a fool, and advised me not to leave the easy life of the priesthood, but to do like him and keep a mistress. I thanked him for his advice and told him I was no dog. Bishop Wood told me of more than one priest in his diocese whom he characterized as immoral, and thoroughly bad men, who to this day hold their offices. Marry, forsooth, in an honorable way, a priest is not allowed, but ruin a poor girl he may. It is better, the Pope teaches, for a priest to have two concubines, than marry one woman lawfully. Shame upon such morality! Shame upon the church with such teaching.

"I repeatedly have heard good and sincere priests say it was a blessing the American people did not know the true character of the Roman priesthood, for if they did, they would sweep them out of the country, and I assure you if you should know them as I do, you would not consider the remark any too harsh. Firstly they have an inordinate desire for money. The poor people are asked for money at all times and occasions. The more a man gives the better he is liked. He must pay every time he comes to church, and every time the priest comes to him. No matter how poor the family may be, how hard the man may work, how much the mother may slave, how poorly

the children are clad, no matter whether the grocer is paid, the priest must have his dues. Baptisms, marriages, and funerals, must be paid for, and woe to the poor Catholic who offers a priest less than five dollars. Too much he can never give. Go to any Catholic church in this city, on Sunday, and you hear something about money always. The more a priest returns to the bishop, for the seminary or other purposes, the higher he rises in the bishop's esteem. Provided a priest is sound on the money question his other qualities are of minor importance. I know over five hundred priests and sixty bishops in this country; I have frequently been in priests' and bishops' company and whenever the question came on the congregations they never asked, "How are your people; are they temperate, faithful in attendance at church; do they raise their children well?" but always, "How much pew rents do you get?" "What do your collections amount to?" "What do you get at Christmas?" "What are your fees for baptism and marriage?" and if the sums did not seem large enough, you would hear a "Damn it, that's little." I know priests who have been scarce ten years in the priesthood and who own from $20,000 to $40,000. Aud the poor people who give are never told where the money goes to. No priest knows what the bishop owns. No congregation hears what a priest receives nor how it is spent. And how is it spent? A good deal of it in gambling, cigars, grand dinners, and good drinks. Priests are without doubt, the best livers in the country. Whenever you meet a company of priests, be it on a Sunday or week day, night or day time, you nearly always find them at a game of euchre and not for mere pastime, but for money. I often saw, especially Irish

priests, play for quarters, halves, and a dollar a game. The German priests were generally content with a game for ten cents. Then come the grand dinners, served in the most approved style, for which the good people foot the bill. Those dinners are not got up on a small scale, either, but cost from $500 to $2,500. The bishop gives generally three or four grand dinners a year, when the priests are invited, and God knows how many on a smaller scale. Priests give their dinners on stated occasions—at the funeral of a priest, on the day of a corner-stone laying, or the dedication of a new church, and annually on the last day of the forty hours. The poor people are in at their prayers, while the good fathers are enjoying their terrapin, canvas-back, and champagne,"

"But the great curse of the priesthood in this country is the vice of drunkenness. Of the extent of this vice I can give you no adequate idea. When priests meet, the first and the last thing is a drink; early in the morning and late at night the whiskey bottle is their consolation. If you would not offer whiskey and wine, and plenty of it, to your visitors, you would soon be spotted and cried down as a fool. Bishop Wood was a frequent visitor at my house, and said he did not want any "Teutonic Acid," meaning good German wine, but insisted on having champagne. And let me show you that his capacity is rather a large one. I was traveling with him in Schuylkill County, three or four weeks before I left the church, and I will now give you his day's work. Early that morning he confirmed in the German Church at St. Clair. After having administered confirmation a good breakfast was spread before him, but he did not touch it but asked for a bottle of wine. Good Father Froude

was rather surprised, and said: "Hallo! wine for breakfast!" After the wine was finished we went to the English Church. There the bishop complained of the poor wine of Father Froude, and asked for and received a bottle of champagne. After he had given confirmation there, a few glasses of lager beer were enjoyed. Then came dinner, and a good one it was, and he partook freely of beer, wine, champagne, and brandy to wash it down. Before we left St. Clair for Mahanoy Plane, on the Superintendent's special car, a few more bottles of champagne were opened and dispatched by him and the priests present. Scarcely had we reached Father O'Connor's house when he asked for goat-milk punch, of which he took two or three glasses, afterward he followed it with a few glasses of champagne. Still he got through with confirming about two hundred people, only complaining of not being quite well; the dinner of terrapin, pheasants, and other choice things served afterward, he did not enjoy, and he went to bed, where I brought to him the last glass of champagne after eleven o'clock. When you hear that a bishop can do so much in that line, and still be able to give confirmation, you will not be surprised to hear that bills for liquors and wines are large with a priest who often enjoys his visits. To be serious, the greater part of the priests who have died in this diocese since I was ordained, died of too much drink, and many priests are serving there now, who more than once suffered from delirium tremens."

"To see priests drunk in their houses, is bad enough; but how much worse, how much more disgraceful is it, for them to be drunk in the pulpit and at the altar. Even in September last, I heard

a sermon preached at the close of the forty hours' devotion, one of the most solemn occasions in the Catholic Church, by a priest when under the influence of liquor. That man arrived about two o'clock in the afternoon completely drunk. He slept off, it is true, partly the effects of his debauch, still, when he preached at seven o'clock, he was anything but sober. After the ceremonies were over, he re-commenced his potations, mixing whiskey, beer, wine and champagne, till he fell on the floor beastly drunk. That man is in the mission to-day, pastor of a large congregation, although it is well known that not a week passes in which he is not drunk once or twice. On another occasion, a priest—who now rests in a drunkard's grave—was so completely drunk when carrying the wafer in procession through his Church, that I and another priest who acted as deacons, had to support him to keep him from falling. I might adduce many more instances of the fearful intemperance as prevailing among the Roman Clergy; but I suppose enough has been said to convince you that temperance is a virtue almost unknown among them."

So much from Father Gerdemann, who, for ten years filled a high position in the Catholic Church, and was regarded as a faithful priest and a bright light. His opportunities for observation and information upon the subject he discussed, were excellent, and his utterances must be accepted as true.

We will now give a few paragraphs upon the American clergy, from ex-Rev. E. E. Guild, who was many years a Protestant clergyman; but who from honest investigation and conviction, was induced to abandon the profession he no longer believed it was right for him to follow. He is now an old man

highly respected by those who know him, and his testimony may be received with all confidence. We quote from his "Pro and Con of Supernaturnl Religion:"

"Undoubtedly the Priesthood, like all the other learned professions, is composed of both good and bad men. But on the score of merit, it cannot justly claim any superiority over the others. Doubtless the Clergy are no better, nor any worse than the average of men, only so far as the false position which they occupy makes them so. With them the business of theological and religious teaching is a profession and a means of obtaining a livelihood. Before they enter upon their work, they must, before God and man, make solemn professions of faith in a certain creed to which they are expected to adhere and defend during life. On their doing this, their living depends. They have a pecuniary interest at stake. The creed must be maintained, missionary work must be done, contributions must be raised, revival excitements must be gotten up, converts must be made, for all this brings grist to their mill. They are conservative in their tendencies, opposed to all innovation, tenacious and bigoted in their opinions and blind to all newly discovered truth. They can seldom see the word truth, because, with them, it is covered by a dollar. Their occupation leads them into the practice of conscious or unconscious hypocrisy. They assume a character before the people that they by no means maintain in their families, or when in company with each other. However grave, sanctimonious and circumspect they may appear in public, when assembled in company by themselves, they are the most jolly of [illegible]. They can then crack their jokes, tell funny

stories, relate smutty anecdotes and indulge in low gossip to an extent unequaled by any except professional libertines. They denounce human selfishness, and are of all men the most selfish; declaim against avarice, and are mercenary and avaricious; preach against pride, fashion and love of the world, and yet are as proud, as servile imitators of fashion, and manifest as much of the love of the world as other men. They insist on the necessity of self-denial, but think themselves entitled to the most comfortable places, the best bits, the choicest dainties, the lion's share of all the good things of life. They profess to be awfully concerned and anxious for the welfare of poor sinners, but their sleek, smooth, well-to-do appearance gives no indication of excessive anxiety. They claim that men in their natural state are totally depraved, and yet, in this country, at least, they profess to believe in a free government, founded on the principle that the people have a right to govern themselves, an inconsistency so glaring that it makes us suspicious of their sincerity.

"The art of proselyting they understand to perfection. This is an important part of their business. However ignorant they may be on all other subjects, this they perfectly well understand. They are in possession of all the accumulated experience of a long line of predecessors extending through all of the past ages. They know human nature well and how to take advantage of its weaknesses. They make their appeals to the superstitious, selfish hopes and fears of ignorant men, and having what Archimedes only wanted, another world on which to plant their machinery. It is no wonder that in almost all past time they have moved this at their pleasure. They

tax all their ingenuity and eloquence in describing the beauties of a heaven about which they know nothing, and a hell of which they are equally ignorant—the one they promise as a reward to all who embrace their doctrines, the other they threaten as a punishment to be inflicted on all who do not. In this way they may succeed, perhaps, in luring some and entrancing others, but no man was ever made really any better by being actuated by such selfish considerations. They condemn human selfishness and yet cultivate and strengthen it by making constant appeals to it. They are the greatest beggars in the world. Their horseleech cry of give, give, can be heard on the mountains and in the valleys, in the public streets and in the churches. At every public meeting ostensibly for the worship of God, the contribution box is passed around and the people are entreated in God's name to give. The people are assured that if they will give, God will restore to them four-fold, but not one of them will stand sponsor for the fulfillment of the promise or guarantee the refunding of the gift in case it is not. In a thousand variety of ways vast sums of money are raised by these men which goes to help the warring sects to vie with each other in building costly churches and to support a class of useless drones in the human hive.

"The same envyings and jealousies that exist among the members of other learned professions exist among them. They will unscrupulously resort to measures to supplant a brother in an advantageous situation, or in the esteem and affections of the people, which lawyers and physicians scorn to adopt, and have too great a sense of honor and manhood to think of adopting. If one of their number happens to become

convinced of the erroneousness of his creed and has independence and moral courage enough to avow his honest opinions, the rest will pounce on him like a hawk upon a chicken. They will pursue him with misrepresentations and slander, hurl at him the epithets of "infidelity," "emissary of Satan," "enemy of religion," call him a Judas, a renegade, an apostate, ostracize him from society if they can, and all to counteract his influence in opposition to their sectarian views. On the other hand, if one of their profession is accused of any crime, the rest of the fraternity will gather around him, form a solid phalanx, and shield him from exposure if they can. The peculiar position occupied by these men brings them into close relation to the female sex. They, knowing that women are more susceptible of religious as well as superstitious influence than men, regard them as their right-hand weapon of offensive and defensive war. They rely mainly on them to further their designs. Women, educated to believe that they must depend on men for support and protection, will inevitably be inclined to look up to the clergy for religious guidance and instruction. This brings them into frequent and familiar intimacy with that class of men. What has been the result? Not only are our sectarian churches made up principally of women and children, but the history of the priesthood in all ages and countries proves that by no other class of professional men have so many crimes against female virtue been committed as by them.

"The clergy profess to look upon what they call Infidelity and Materialism with the utmost horror and detestation. They represent that the Materialistic doctrines are destructive of all joy and peace on earth,

and deprive us of all our bright hopes and anticipations in regard to the future. Apparently they are entirely unconscious of the fact that they themselves are constantly promulgating a doctrine as much more horrible than anything in Materialism as it is in the power of the human imagination to conceive. At the very worst, even, ultra-Materialism would do nothing worse than consign us to the quiet sleep of non-existence or annihilation, whereas the doctrine of the clergy would involve a majority of our race in miseries untold, never-ending and indescribable. All, therefore, who hope for a future blissful existence, must desire it with the full knowledge that if they have it, they enjoy it at the expense of the endless and inconceivable sufferings of millions of their fellow men. Can a more monstrous exhibition of supreme selfishness be conceived?

"These men claim, too, that by some mysterious supernatural process they have experienced such a change of nature, such a regeneration of character, such a sanctification of mind and heart as fits them to be the mouth-pieces of God, and the leaders and instructors of mankind. But of what use is it for them to pretend to any superior sanctity, when all intelligent men know, and all the world ought to know, that they "are men of like passions as others," that they have the same appetites, passions, desires, faults and foibles that all men have. The criminal records of the country prove that in proportion to their numbers no class of educated men furnish a greater number of the inmates of our jails and prisons than the clergy.

"There are in the United States nearly fifty thousand clergymen. We would utilize this element of society. That portion of them who, by their educa-

tion, talents and moral worth, are qualified for the work, we would have converted into teachers in our schools and seminaries of learning, public lecturers and leaders of the people in the great work of reform. We would have them teach their fellow men on those subjects about which they have some positive knowledge, and in relation to which it is of the utmost importance that they be informed. We would have them teach the people to know themselves, to do their own thinking, to form their own opinions, to understand the laws of their own nature, and the conditions on which the prosperity and happiness of human beings depend. We would place them on a level with the rest of mankind, give them the same chances, the same opportunities, and let them depend on themselves, instead of being merely dependents upon others. As for the rest, we would have them expend the force and energy, which they now spend for naught, in some branches of trade, or agriculture, and thereby make themselves a blessing to the world.

"To this, or something like this, it must come at last. The people will not always suffer themselves to be led hoodwinked to their own destruction. A revolt is sure to come, and when it does come it is to be hoped that the crimes of the priesthood against humanity will not be too vividly remembered against them, and that the sins of their predecessors who lived in the dead past will not be visited on those who exist in the living present."

We wish not to exaggerate their short-comings, to misrepresent their motives, nor even to tell the whole truth concerning them; but we will in this connection give a few instances, derived from authentic sources, where our modern clergy have shown themselves weak

and criminal, proving conclusively to the unprejudiced that they are unworthy the reverence and obsequiousness accorded them. And right here the question arises, if they are not better, holier, nor more godly than other men, why will their silly, infatuated followers still continue to revere and absolutely worship them under the mistaken belief that they are "men of God," and superior to all others ?

U. S. SENATOR BROWNLOW, of Tennessee, who was for many years a clergyman, as well as an editor and after, Governor of the State, in his book published some years ago, uses this language in reference to clergymen in the South: "I have no hesitancy in saying, as I now do, that the worst men who make tracks upon Southern soil are Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Episcopal clergymen, and at the head of them for mischief are the Methodists" [p. 187]. "A majority of the clergymen have acted upon the principle that the kingdom of their divine master is of this world, and as a consequence many of them have embarked in fighting, lying and drinking mean whiskey. [p. 190]. "Here, as in all parts of the South, the worst class of men are preachers. They have done more to bring about the deplorable state of things existing in the country, (meaning the war of the rebellion), than any other class of men. And foremost in this work of mischief are the Methodist preachers. Brave in anticipation of war, and prone to denunciation on all occasions, even in the pulpit, they have been among the first to take to their heels." [p. 392].

REV. MR. CRAIG, El Paso, Ill., was guilty of *crim. con.* with a lady of the place.

A CLERICAL GENT of Detroit, forsook his wife and family, and went away with another woman, and re-

sumed preaching in the far West, hoping to "meet all his Detroit friends in heaven."

Rev. Mr. Wesley, Geneseo, Ill., ran away with another man's wife.

Rev. E. P. W. Packard had his wife put in an insane asylum when she was not insane, because she would not acknowledge she believed a part of the human family were destined to burn forever in hell.

Rev. Ephriam K. Avery, a promising young clergyman of New England, it will be remembered by many, after seducing his victim, a young lady of previous good character, cruelly murdered her in the most fiendish manner, and left her hanging by the neck.

A Catholic Priest, of Evansville, Ind., was proved to be guilty of gross improprieties and immorality with young girls under his charge.

A Rev. Gent of England, was recently proven guilty of forgery and other criminal conduct.

The case of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher is still fresh in the public mind. The charge of his numerous *liasons* with the females of his flock, particularly with Mrs. Tilton, has not been disproved. In the protracted trial of six months in the Brooklyn City Court where he was arraigned by Theodore Tilton for the crime of adultery, although much important testimony was not allowed to appear, a volumnious mass was presented, consisting of Mr. Beecher's and Mrs. Tilton's damning letters, his confessions, admissions, and his contrition, so conclusively proved by the sworn testimony of several individuals, that though a jury of personal friends and admirers failed to agree in a verdict, hundreds and thousands of his countrymen are fully convinced of his guilt, and that during the thir-

teen days he was himself upon the witness stand, that he was guilty of shameless, continued, open, and bare-faced *perjury!* PERJURY!! PERJURY!!! This conviction is constantly fastening more and more on the public mind, and though his congregation voted him $100,000 for the year, and though he continues to fill the pulpit, there are comparatively few who believe him an innocent man. A second trial has been instituted, which it is believed will throw more light upon the case. That he is a man of great amativeness is well understood by those who know him best. This, however, we do not mention as a crime, and it doubtless is the secret of his great magnetism and popularity, but it is expected Divines will keep their animal passions under suitable control.

Rev. H. D. Fields, Maquoketa, Iowa, attempted to commit suicide.

Rev. J. S. Bartlett, Milford, Ohio, was guilty of criminal intimacy with a pretty married woman of that town, who had no children.

Rev. Mr. Linn, of Pittsburgh, was guilty of several improprieties with the ladies of his congregation.

Rev. Miriam D. Wood, of Decatur, Ga., seduced Miss Emma J. Chivers. Result, a bouncing boy without a legal father.

Rev. J. M. Mitchell, of Savannah, Ga., and formerly from Maine, was guilty of gross improprieties with females of his fold. When charged with the offences, he stoutly denied it, and asserted his innocence; bnt when proofs accumulated and stared him in the face, he was compelled to confess to Bishop Beckwith, that he was not only guilty of the offences as charged, but that he had used the grossest falsehood in endeavoring to conceal his crimes.

The embroglio between Rev. Dr. Langdon, and Rev. Dr. Goodenough, and several other Reverends of the Methodist Book Concern of this city, is well remembered, when charges of dishonesty, embezzlement, falsehood, &c., &c., were freely made against each other.

Rev. Mr. Lindsley, of Medina, N. Y., whipped a little child of his, three years old, for two hours and until it died. The excuse alleged by the reverend "man of God" was, that the child would not obey its step-mother and say its prayers. He was imprisoned at Albion, and came near being lynched by an infuriated populace.

Rev. L. D. Huston, *the clerical villain* of Baltimore, was guilty of seducing and ruining several young, innocent girls, daughters of widows and other members of his congregation, who were sent to him for instruction in morality. The fiendish ingenuity he employed in accomplishing his vile purposes was enough to strike one with horror.

Rev. A. T. Thompson, of Cincinnati, was guilty of numerous criminal intimacies with females—married and unmarried—of his congregation, as well as of gross intemperance in the use of intoxicating liquors.

Rev. E. F. Berkley, of St. Louis, was guilty of criminal liberties with the young women of his flock —"the gentle ewe-lambs of the fold." Among others was Ella C. Perry, of the immature age of eleven years.

Rev. Washington W. Welch, near Holly, Mich., committed a rape upon Mrs. Louisa Green, the wife of a brother minister.

Rev. Geo. Washburn, of the Lewistown and Bradford Circuit, Alleghany County, N. Y., was engaged

in courting two or more young ladies at the same time, and was under promise of marriage to several of them.

Rev. Dr. Griswold, of Maine, of South Carolina, and other localities, was noted as a "ladies' man." His love adventures were numerous and spicy. He was also very fond of jovial and convivial company. He committed the crime of bigamy, having two wives at one time.

Rev. Wm. Holt, near Paris, Ill., whipped a widow woman with plow lines.

Rev. Thurlow Tresselman, in Annetia, N. Y., seduced several young ladies of his flock, and when unmistakable indications became so apparent that he was charged with the matter, and about to be tried, he left the place very early one morning with the gay Mrs. Hurst, the wife of a gentleman who was absent from home.

Rev. E. G. Ribble, of De Kalb Connty, Ill., seduced four young girls in the neighborhood, and ran away, leaving a wife and two children behind him unprovided for. A shocking case of scandalous criminality.

Rev. B. Phinney, of Westboro, Mass., was guilty of licentiousness with various females connected with his church.

Rev. Mr. Reed, of Malden, was in the same category.

Rev. I. S. Kalloch, of Kansas, while a resident of Massachusetts, visited a neighboring village with a woman not his wife, and hiring a room in a hotel for a short time, committed adultery with her then and there, as testified to by an eye-witness. Mr. Kalloch after this little difficulty removed to Kansas, and for

several years wallowed in the mire of politics; but not succeeding just to his mind in obtaining offices, he after a while, for the second time, turned his attention to ministerial duties and pleasures. But sad to say, the lovely sisters once more proved too charming for him, and he wandered in by and forbidden paths. He was hauled up before the Church authorities for his peccadilloes, and finally "stepped down and out" for a season; but we believe he is now once more imparting to his admiring hearers the will and requirements of God. Mr. Kalloch is still residing in Kansas.

Rev. Dr. Pomeroy, Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, Boston, was proved to be a liberal patron of houses of ill-fame, where he freely used the money his confiding flock had donated for the conversion of foreign heathen. By his own confession he had paid over $6,000 to women of notorious character in that city.

Rev. Tunis Titus Kendrick, of Brooklyn, was proved guilty of drunkenness and other immoral conduct. He struggled a long time, but did not succeed in gaining admission into the church from which he was expelled.

Rev. R. H. Williamson, Wilkesbarre, Pa. (pastor of the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church) was guilty of visiting houses of ill-fame and other immoral conduct.

Rev. Mr. Smith, of Illinois, a few years ago drowned his wife in a shallow stream by holding her head under water.

Rev. Father John Daly, Catholic, Montgomery, Mo., seduced a young girl named Lizzie McDonnell. The girl was nineteen years of age, and her mother had

been housekeeper for the priest for a long time. After getting her in the condition to soon become a mother he procured an abortion on her. The congregation were much excited in consequence, while a portion of the church authorities did all they could to smother the reports.

Rev. Archibald Hines, Knoxville, Tenn., was charged with stealing fifty cents from a bowl in the cupboard of one of his parishioners, and it made a great excitement among the saints.

Rev. Thomas Botts of the Baptist Church, Philadelphia, had charges preferred against him by two deacons and five prominent members, for undue familiarity with certain lady members of the church and for want of truthfulness. Some twenty witnesses were examined during the trial, most of whom were ladies.

A Methodist Minister in Cheltenham, Pa., was boarding with the wife of one of the Deacons of his church. The Deacon had a blooming daughter of fifteen summers, with whom the parson became so much enamoured that his passions were greatly aroused. The mother of the young girl was justly shocked on a certain occasion to find the clerical gentleman in bed with her daughter. The pastor endeavored to explain the unfortunate occurrence to the satisfaction of the parent, by claiming that he must have got into the girl's bed while he was asleep, but the story was not credited by the parents, and he was given twenty-four hours to leave the neighborhood.

Rev. Dick Bottles, of Meridan, Miss., was arrested for stealing a ham ; but as he is a son of Ham, possibly he thought he had a right to it.

Rev. Charles A. Graber pastor of the Lutheran

Church in Meriden, Conn., was accused of Beecher-like immorality, and of improper connection with the sisters. Like Beecher he denied it, but would not stand an examination, saying he preferred to resign his charge.

Rev. Mr. Wilcox held a revival meeting of several days duration, several years ago in Northern Illinois. He was loud and earnest in his appeals for "dying sinners to come to Jesus ;" but in due process of time it was found that during that religious revival the Rev. Mr. Wilcox had become the father of four illegitimate children.

Rev. Mr. Dowling, Indianapolis, Ind., prominent among the Campbellites, committed adultery with his servant girl, and was seen in the act by persons from a higher window in a neighboring house.

Abbe Joseph Chabert, a prominent Catholic ecclesiastic of Montreal, and principal of the government school of art and design, was on September 25th arrested on a charge of rape, committed on Josephine Beauchamp, a girl of fifteen years, and in his own room. Probably his saintship had indulged too much in celibacy, until the flesh rebelled against the spirit.

Rev. John Newland Maffit, a noted revivalist who flourished twenty-five years ago and was noted for his vehemence in drawing vivid pictures of hell and frightening sinners to flee from the wrath to come, and for his ardent love for the female portion of his followers, often indulged in carnal pleasures with the admiring sisters. After the exercises of the evening were over, it was not an unusual thing for him to go home with a female member of the Church and pass the night with her. On an occasion of this kind in Louisville, Ky., a fire broke out in the vicinity where

the revivalist was lodging, and in the excitement, he and his lady love rushed in their night clothes to the windows to see where the fire was. Our informant knew Maffit well, and was positive he saw him in the lady's private chamber, in his shirt only, and after midnight. The next night he was as zealous as ever, pleading for Jesus.

Rev. E. W. Sehon, formerly of Louisville, Ky., and a very prominent member in the Methodist clergy in Kentucky, held sexual intercourse with a prostitute of that city, in his own Church, after dark of an evening.

Rev. John A. Hudkins, of Mt. Airy, O., was a bigamist, or rather a trigamist, having three wives at a time. He eluded justice by escaping to Canada.

A Baptist clergyman of North Carolina, was imprisoned for bastardy. The fine assessed against him was paid by members of his Church, and when he was released from confinement, the sisters of his congregation met him at the prison door and received him with open arms.

Rev. W. H. Johnson, of Rahway, N. J., was convicted for stealing chickens, and was sentenced to prison for the offense.

Rev. Luke Mills, of the Methodist Church, Norwich Conn., decamped with a considerable sum of money which had been collected for building a new Church. He was also said to be guilty of irregularities with a female member of his congregation.

A well known Episcopal clergyman of Covington, Ky., has several times partaken too freely of intoxicating liquors, so as to plainly show the effect it had upon him. On Christmas day of 1874, he preached a sermon in St. John's fashionable Church

in Cincinnati, and he was so fuddled with egg nog and communion wine, his preaching was so strange and his language so incoherent that his condition was made apparent to all present. His mumbling became so senseless that the wardens made signals to the congregation, and in shame and disgrace they left the Church and the drunken pastor to talk to empty benches.

Rev. Mr. Warren, of Busset Hills, N. Y., resigned his charge at the special request of his congregation, beeause he was the husband of three living and undivorced wives. He asked to preach a *farewell* sermon, but they would not consent to it. It was only leniency on their part that prevented them from prosecuting him for bigamy and sending him to State prison.

Rev. Mr. Deardoff, of Yates City, Ill., held a protracted meeting at Yates City, a few months ago, and was one night invited by one of the sisters to go home with her and stay over night. Upon arriving there he began improper familiarities, and she not feeling in the humor for the like, and tearing herself away from his embrace, rushed to one of the neighbors for safety. It is needless to say the protracted meeting came to a sudden termination, and the reverend gent proceeded to another field where the sisters were more accommodating.

Rev. Mr. Curtiss, not long since conducted a revival meeting at Plano, Ill., and lived on "chicken fixings" and the best the pious sisters knew how to get up for him. Clerical business called him to the village of Blackberry, where he put up at a hotel and staid over night. When he retired he was either so absorbed in the spirit, or in the flesh, that he acci-

dentally got into bed with a woman not his wife. When discovered in this interesting situation by some over-curious individuals, he claimed that the little affair was entirely an accident. It is singular how many of these little accidents do take place.

Rev. Dr. Fiske, upon a trial for adultery in Michigan, unlike many of his brothers of the cloth, honestly owned up as follows: "I frankly confess to the fearful sin of which I am charged, and I will not be a coward to lie or seek palliation of my weakness and guilt. I have returned my letter of fellowship to the denomination I have so grievously stricken, and have abandoned the profession I have so deplorably shamed. "I am not a coward or sneak to make Adam's plea, that a woman did it. It was my own weak and unguarded soul that in a moment of frenzy and passion wrought my downfall!" This man was much more honorable and honest than a majority of his brothers who are tried for similar offenses, and insist "through thick and thin" in the face of positive proof that they are perfectly innocent.

Rev. K. N. Wright and Rev. Mr. Kristeller, both contested for the same pulpit at Newbridge, N. Y. The first had preached there a year and was opposed to leaving. The second was appointed by the Conference to succeed him. The first refused to vacate; hence the quarrel. The Church divided as to the two claimants, some joining one side, and some the other. The quarrel waxed very warm until the saints shook their fists at each other in a very ungodly manner.

Rev. A. W. Torrey, Kalamazoo, Mich., was tried by the Church for falsehood and was found guilty.

Rev. Mr. Coleman, of the M. E. Church, in E.

Janesville Circuit, Iowa, was held in $5,000 bonds for committing a rape on a girl thirteen years old.

Rev. Mr. Parshall, Oakland, Cal., was not long ago tried by a Church Council for lascivious conduct with sisters of the congregation. He was convicted and left town.

Rev. A. W. Eastman, West Cornwall, O., was expelled from the Baptist Church for immorality.

Another Baptist Clergyman at Sabin, Mich., was detected in too much familiarity with some of the sisters, and ran away to avoid the shame of exposure.

Rev. John Hutchinson, Episcopal, Boston, was sent to the House of Correction for eight months, for swindling George Allen out of a thousand dollars.

Rev. Wm. Rice, Methodist, Mason, Mich., was convicted of adultery.

A Pious Reverend in Warren, Mc Comb County, Mich., was charged with violating a dozen school girls and swearing them to secrecy on the crucifix of the Church. He ran away to escape exposure.

Rev. D. M. White, Presbyterian, Pittsburg, Pa., was sent to State prison for two years for stealing money.

Kev. D. S. K. Pine, same place, was charged by a young woman with sexual irregularities.

Rev. Dr. Wm. G. Murray, rector of the Central Church, Baltimore, got drunk and was extremely profane.

Rev. A. Steelson, plead guilty to the charge of too much intimacy with the sisters.

Rev. James E. Reesdolph, Methodist, Adrian, Mich., was sent to the Detroit House of Correction for sixty days, for false pretenses and getting drunk.

Rev. Mr. Reynolds, Muhlenburg Co., Ky., brutally and repeatedly whipped his daughter, eighteen years of age, to force her to marry a man she did not prefer.

Rev. Hiram Meeker, Granville, N. Y., was convicted of fornication and adultery.

Rev. H. Foster, Circleville, O., was compelled to marry his servant girl whom he had seduced.

Rev. John Seelly Watson, Kansas, murdered his wife.

Rev. Mr. Johnson, Williamson Co., Tenn., seduced a girl fourteen years of age.

Rev. E. S. Whipple, Baptist, of Hillsdale College, Mich., seduced a deacon's wife, and when confronted with the charge, was compelled to confess it. He afterwards prayed with the deacon and his wife. The deacon must have enjoyed that.

Rev. Richard Dunlap, Baptist, Midland, Mich., was convicted of adultery with a Mrs. Burnett.

Rev. Mr. Davis, same denomination, was arraigned for adultery with sister Brunk.

Rev. Mr. Kirby, Chambersburgh, O., was fined $200 for seduction.

Rev. Malcolm Clark, superintendent of the Sunday school, Howard, Mich., ran away with $400 belonging to his mother-in-law, and also forged her name to obtain other money.

Rev. Mr. White, Washington, Pa., was found guilty of seduction.

Rev. J. H. Ross, Baptist, Hartford Mich., was guilty of forgery.

Rev. T. M. Dawson, Brooklyn, Cal., left that locality and went to Nevada, leaving a number of his brethren, in the aggregate, several thousands of dol-

lars in arrears, he having invested for them in mining stocks. He was also, not long before, divorced from his wife on the grounds of desertion.

Rev. George O. Eddy, was deposed for bigamy at Gloversville, N. Y.

Ren. Mr. Edgerton, same place, was afterwards charged with theft. He boarded at the Mansion House, and a servant found a quantity of stolen towels, napkins &c., in a satchel in his room. He was arrested and he left his watch in payment for his board bill.

Rev. L. T. Hardy, a Baptist Elder in Shelbyville, Ky., had a fall from decency. He eloped with one of the sisters of his congregation, and her brother pursued the pair in hot haste.

Rev. Benjamin F. Bowen, Cold Spring, N. Y., was tried for malicious trespass.

Rev. J. A. Davidson, recent State lecturer for the Grand Lodge of Good Templars of Pennsylvania, was arrested at Erie for drunkenness and disorderly conduct and had a fine to pay. He is said to have organized more lodges than any other person in the State.

Rev. J. M. Porter, Bethlehem, N. J., was deposed from the ministry and Christian fellowship by an ecclesiastical council for gross immorality in connection with the sisters of the Church.

Elder Sands of the Baptist Church in Hoosick, N. Y., formerly an insurance agent in this city, was charged with "naughty" conduct with a ewe-lamb of his flock. He paid frequent visits to her and one day her brother surprised them in very suspicious relations together. An investigating committee was appointed to enquire into the case. The girl was entirely mum

and had no communication to make on the subject. The Elder confessed to having his hands under the young lady's clothes but further than that deposed not. The affair, however, was smoothed over and hushed up, and the gay Lothario still breaks the bread of life to the faithful.

Rev. G. W. Porter, Methodist, recently had a trial at Danbyborough, Vt., for adultery with Miss Hattie Allen. The young lady was on the witness stand nine hours and made a clean-breast of the affair, making the preacher's guilt most apparent to all present.

Rev. John W. Hanna, Presiding Elder, and the most prominent Methodist preacher in the State of Tennessee, and one of the ablest lights in the Episcopal Church South, has recently in Murphysboro, Tenn., had a trial before a church investigating committee, consisting of Bishop McTyeirie and five prominent clergymen, for gross immorality in writing a lavicious letter to Miss Parilla Nailor for trying to seduce her from the path of virtue and to yield herself to his lustful embrace. In his amorous suit he directed the attention of the young lady to the Seventh Chapter of Solomon's Songs, hoping the amorous character of that portion of "God's Word" would aid him in his unholy enterprise. Fortunately the young lady's brother intercepted the base letter and detected the hoary, clerical lecher. Upon exposure he became very penitent and acknowledged in great sorrow his criminal folly. The love of Jesus in his case was altogether insufficient to keep him pure and upright.

Rev. John S. Glendenning, of Jersey City, N. J. it will be remembered held a long trial for the seduction of Mary E. Pomeroy who deposed with her dying

breath that he was the father of her child, and that he had seduced her. Although the clergyman boldly and persistently asserted his innocence the public were satisfied he was a basely guilty man.

Rev. W. H. Buttner, pastor of St. Luke's Church, (Lutheran) of New York, was arrainged before the church authorities for deceiving a young lady under promise of marriage. He was requested to resign his charge and he had the good sense to do so.

Rev. Austin Hutchinson, of Vermont, was charged by his own daughter, Ida, with being the father of her babe five months old, she asserting the fact with great persistency.

Rev. Mr. Quint, of Bedford, Mass., while stopping in Brooklyn in the summer of 1874, during which time he officiated several Sundays in Plymouth Pulplt, was known by certain parties to visit women of easy virtue and that he was guilty of conduct very unbecoming a man of virtue and integrity.

Rev. L. L. Copeland of Vermont, and a revivalist of some note, was denounced as a rascal. The credentials upon which he entered the ministry, even, were pronounced forgeries, and he was accused of being a swindler and a bigamist.

Rev. J. H. Todd, of Sioux City, Iowa, played an unmanly trick upon his wife, while she was mending his pants, he slipped out of the house and eloped with a milliner.

Rev. A. B. Burdick, of River Point, R. I., was guilty of improprieties of a social character with female lambs of his flock. Eight witnesses testified pointedly against him, his guilt was unmistakably established and he was compelled to "step down and out."

Rev. Joseph Stillim, Winchester, Pa., was charged with ruining a young lady, Miss Sarah Hall, who stood high in the society of that locality. The great disgrace rendered her insane, but in her lucid moments she averred the reverned gentleman quoted scripture to her to prove that his conduct was in keepin with the word of God. She unfortunately trusted too far in a false shepherd.

Father Forham, of the Catholic Church, Chicago, was charged and tried for embezzling several thousand dollars that belonged to the church. He claimed a large part of the money was won by gambling in a church fair, that there was no legal owner to it and that he had as much right to it as any one. He was held in $5.000 bail.

Rev. Alfred N. Gilbert, of Baltimore, had charges preferred against him by members of his own church, for sinful intimacies with a grass widow also belonging to his congregation. The widow was induced to leave and the matter piously hushed up and the pastor's preaching and praying was resumed.

Rev. John Hobart, Methodist, Malden, Mass., was early in 1875, arraigned before the District Court, to answer a complaint made by Mrs. Anna L. Lundleery, charging him with being the father of her unborn babe. He was nearly sixty years of age and originally came from Vermont. He graduated as a minister at Middletown, Conn. He preached a few years at Fall River, Mass., and was also a chaplain in the army. It was charged upon him, that after getting this woman in the bad situation alluded to, he induced a simple man by the name of Lundleery to marry her; but his crime was not thereby concealed.

Rev. Mr. Humpstone, Myalta, N. Y., in conse-

quence of a Church difficulty, tendered his resignation in April, 1875. On the following Sunday it was arranged that the Rev. Mr. Cook officiate in his place; but he not putting in an appearance, it was suggested by a brother, that Bro. Humpstone read the services. Dr. Bellinger opposed the proposition and rebuked the brother for making it; and when Bro. Humpstone arose to speak, Dr. Bellinger ordered him to sit down. The ex-pastor would not be thus ordered down. The contending parties then clinched and a disgraceful fight ensued.

Rev. J. R. Stillwell, of Logansport, Ind., was brought before the Church for making improper advances towards the sisters of his flock. A clear case was made against him, and without adding falsehood and perjury to his other crimes, he had the discretion to confess his offences, resign his charge and leave the place. The local papers regretted the circumstances, more especially as it came in the midst of a successful revival which was sensibly checked by the publicity of the clerical scandal.

Rev. Thomas Barnard, of London, recently got disgracefully drunk, and in that condition went to the Globe Theatre, where Lydia Thompson was engaged. That evening a new piece was put upon the stage in which Mrs. Thompson did not appear. This so enraged the drunken parson that he stamped, shouted and hissed to that extent, that a policeman arrested him and took him to prison.

Rev. J. J. Reeder, a young clergyman, went in 1874 to New Milford, Pa., and studdied for a time under the Rev. E. F. Bledson, pastor of the Methodist Church of that village. Subsequently he was sent by the Newark, N. J., Conference, to fill a va-

cancy at that place. The young divine proved to be popular, especially with the yonnger sisters of the society, with whom he spent the most of his time. He afterwards manifested a great fondness for horse flesh. He traded in fast horses, and soon obtained the reputation of being a good judge of equine stock. He finally purchased a valuable horse for which he gave his note; but just before it became due he suddenly decamped to parts unknown, leaving many unpaid bills behind. In his hasty flight he left his trunks and books, which were sold to pay his debts; but unfortunately they went but a short way towards paying them. It is not known in what part of the moral vineyard he is now laboring.

Rev. Charles S. Macready, of Middleboro, Mass., on May 20, 1875, committed suicide by cutting his throat with a razor.

Rev. J. J. Howell, Presbyterian, Minneapolis, Minn., hung himself in May, 1875.

Rev. Samuel B. Wilson, of the First Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Ky., was in May, 1875, deposed by the Presbytery for immoral conduct.

Rev. John W. Porter, in the Winter and Spring of 1875, had a charge at Van Sycles Corners, Hunting Co., N. J, In addition to preaching he also taught school. It turned out that the villain basely seduced one of his young female pupils, named Silenda Stires, a daughter of Peter W. Stires, a well-to-do farmer in the neighborhood. While she was yet a mere child, she was about to become a mother. Upon being questioned, she informed her parents of the nature of the lessons the clergyman had taught her. Upon his being confronted by the injured father, the villain confessed his crime and turned

over his horse and buggy to partly make amends for his shameful conduct, and with his heart-stricken wife, took the first train of cars for another field of labor.

The case of BISHOP ONDERDONK of New Jersey and his protracted trial several years ago, for being guilty of sexual intercourse with different females in his library, will be remembered by many of our readers. Though great efforts were made to screen this prominent light of the church, the public were made painfully sensible of his guilt.

For want of room and from a disinclination to further pursue the subject at this time, we decline extending the recital of similar instances. With a moderate effort enough authentic statements of a like character, of our weak, sinful clergy could be collected to fill a large volume. Probably scarcely one case in ten of the criminal acts of clergymen are brought to light. They are "hushed up" and smothered for the "good of the cause" when it is possible to do so. Doubtless many of our readers can call to mind cases of clerical peccadilloes, falling under their notice which never appeared in print. We think, however, we have said enough to convince candid, honest people that priests and clergymen are no holier than other men; that they know nothing more about God, have no more influence with him, are no more controlled by the principles of virtue, morality and self-denial than their fellow men.

In closing we simply ask, is it for such conduct as we have named, and is it for perpetuating and maintaining such a privileged class, that the people of this country are paying the priesthood over sixty millions of dollars annually? Is any good to be gained by

keeping these facts smothered and concealed, and is it not about time these Reverend gentry were shown up in their true light, and be appreciated by the public in their real character?

A Word of Advice.

READER: If you wish a live, fearless, outspoken, Radical sheet, subscribe for

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

a Weekly Journal of Free Thought and Reform. Does not every true Liberal feel interested in the success of this enterprise? And can he have fully discharged his duty, who does not aid in its support?

Published at $2.00 per year, including postage, by

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway N. Y.

Joshua's Stopping the Sun and Moon.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[From The Truth Seeker of April 1st, 1875.]

Of all the remarkable tales that have ever been narrated by any story-teller, or written in any book, whether "Baron Munchausen," "Gulliver's Travels," "The Arabian Nights," "Robinson Crusoe," or in the wild nursery tales for children, in point of extravagance, improbability, impossibility and absurdity, there is nothing that equals the account of Joshua's causing the sun and moon to stand still, as related in the tenth chapter of the book called by his name. After this mighty military man had demolished the cities of Jericho and Ai, putting to death every man, woman and child, "leaving not a soul to breathe," some of the neighboring nations very naturally became alarmed at these blood-thirsty Israelites, and deemed it best to placate them and make friends with them. Thus the

men of Gibeon dressed themselves in tattered garments, with worn-out shoes and clouts on their feet, and with mouldy food, and rent wine-bottles, appeared before the Israelites, pretending to have come a long journey and were anxious to make a treaty with them. Joshua and his men were deceived by this stratagem, and entered into a solemn treaty that they would do no harm to the Gibeonites, and swore to it in the most sacred manner by their God.

When the five kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon, heard of the treaty thus made they were very much incensed at the Gibeonites, and united their own forces to destroy the nation at which they had become offended. Whereupon the Gibeonites deeming their danger imminent, called upon their new allies, the Jews, to "help them out." Joshua, with commendable alacrity, went to their relief, and the fighting and bloodshed were soon in active operation. He evidently had a great fondness for this business of carnage, as nearly his whole time was occupied in that direction. The number of men engaged, however, was very insignificant compared with many other armies the world has known. "The nations," so-called, were small, being little more than tribes, occupying a single city each. Nevertheless it was evidently a pretty lively time, and Joshua deeming the day too short to properly finish the slaughter so vigorously prosecuted, commanded the sun and moon to stand still, and they obeyed him, for nearly the space of a whole day, thus giving him and the Jews time to be avenged upon their enemies.

We repeat, this is the most monstrous and utterly impossible story that ever was told. To say a flea swallowed Bunker Hill Monument, that a spider and

a bed-bug built a ship five hundred feet long, or that a grasshopper hauled a train of twenty loaded cars five hundred miles in ten hours, would be tame and insignificant compared with this Bible story. What is it to stop the sun and moon in their courses? The sun is an immense body of matter nearly a million miles in diameter. One hundred globes the size of the earth, placed side by side, would not equal the diameter of the sun. It is more than a thousand times greater than the earth, and nearly a hundred times greater than all the rest of the solar system. The momentum of such a vast body in rapid transit is utterly inconceivable. The moon is smaller than the earth, and only two hundred and forty thousand miles distant, but what can a man, or all the men that ever lived combined, do towards stopping it, much less the sun, ninety-five millions of miles away? Those orbs have doubtless for millions of years been in incessant and rapid motion, performing their regular circuits, pursuant to laws and forces impossible to be set aside for an instant, and how idle to say a man ever stopped them, or even that a God ever stopped them. They are minute parts of the boundless Universe which move in harmonious accord and co-operation, and were it possible to stop a part, the most inconceivable confusion would ensue. To go into an immense machine shop where numerous huge and ponderous wheels are running with great velocity, the larger matching and fitting into the smaller, and all being impelled by a tremendous power, gives a very imperfect idea of the countless worlds and suns filling the Universe, moving in perfect unison in their intricate connection; and should a heavy bar of iron or stick of timber be thrust between two of the wheels so as to suddenly

interrupt the movement of the machinery, it would afford a very imperfect conception of the utter confusion and destruction it must cause in the Universe should a part of its machinery be suddenly stopped.

No machinery made by man can give an adequate idea of the machinery of the Universe. As well talk about a fly at the Cape of Good Hope stopping the Falls of Niagara, as Joshua stopping the sun and moon. The thing is too preposterous to be thought of seriously for a moment. The silly argument so often used—"all things are possible with God"—will not avail. God cannot act against himself, and to subvert the forces of the Universe would be to act against himself.

Perhaps it is hardly worth while to allude to the trivial matter of the sun and moon both cheering the Israelites by shining upon them at the same time, in their bloody work of carnage, the one being on Gibeon and the other in the Valley of Ajalon. It would seem unnecessary for Joshua to have detained both of them, and it may strike some as singular how the moon could give much light while the sun was pouring down his rays; but people are required to have faith and believe what the book says.

It may be justly urged that if a day was to be increased in length, it would not be necessary to stop the sun, but the earth. This does not remove the impossibility of the story, but simply illustrates the total ignorance of the motions of the heavenly bodies on the part of the person who wrote the book of Joshua. It was then believed day and night were produced by the sun every twenty-four hours, making a complete circuit around the earth. The fact that a person so ignorant of the actual movements of our

sun, moon and earth, should be held up to us as one writing the "word of God," is sufficient reason why we should not believe a word he utters. As well might we believe the ancient false supposition that the earth had *corners*, that it had *foundations* and rested on the backs of huge elephants, tortoises, etc. True, astronomers assure us the sun has two distinct motions, one upon its own axis, and another with the entire solar system around a more immense and far distant sun; but the writers of the Bible knew nothing of this, and supposed the sun and moon every day performed a journey around the earth.

It would be no easier for Joshua to stop the motions of the earth than the sun. It has been whirling for unknown ages at the speed of one thousand miles an hour in its diurnal revolution, and through space at the velocity of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour in its yearly course around the sun. It has never stopped for an instant, and never will, so long as the matter which composes it retains its present form. How idle, then, for any story-teller to talk about a man, or any other being, stopping it for a day.

If for one moment we admit such a possibility, would not that day, "unlike any before it or since," and nearly double the length of other days, have been known elsewhere than at the city of Gibeon? The same sun that shone there, sent his rays to every part of the earth, and the intelligent nations of Egypt, Persia, India, China and other countries whose history runs much further back than the time of Joshua, would assuredly have known it and had some account of this most wonderful occurrence, had it ever taken place. But not a word do we hear of it from any part of the world, or any being except the anony-

mous author of the book of Joshua. Who this writer was, no one knows. It could not have been Joshua himself, for it refers to events that occurred long after his death, and in several instances uses language that has no meaning, unless the book was written long after the events were said to have transpired.

The motive or reason assigned for this most wonderful miracle that ever was related, is as improbable and as unreasonable as the story itself. It is, that a few thousand, at most, of poor, hapless mortals—offspring of the same Universal Power of which we claim to be emanations—might be cruelly slaughtered by the merciless Israelites, pursuant to a treaty they had been wheedled into by fraud. Can any sane person, for a moment, believe the Architect of all worlds, if he had the power, would stop the machinery of the Universe for a reason so contemptible, as to give time for one barbarous nation to slaughter a few thousands of another barbarous nation? Reason, justice and common sense forbid! Such a disposition may have been in keeping with the warlike, bloodthirsty and partial character as credited to Jehovah, the tutelar Deity of the Jews, but it does not inure to the Universal Force and life-principle pervading the immense Universe, which shows no partiality to one nation over another, and delights not in carnage and bloodshed. The two should not be mistaken, one for the other; there is no similarity between them. If Jehovah wished to destroy those unfortunate Amorites, why not accomplish it suddenly, as he is said to have exterminated much larger numbers on other occasions? Or why not slay them by continuing the throwing of rocks upon them out of heaven, as the same

chapter says he did on this occasion? It asserts he "slew them with great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. There were more which died from hail-stones than they which the children of Israel slew with the sword." It appears the Lord had a special ill-will toward those poor people, to treat them in that harsh manner, and it would seem his ammunition must have been exhausted—the heavenly rocks—or he would have kept up the fire until the last man was killed, and thus save him the trouble of interfering with the machinery of the Universe to lengthen out the day, so that Joshua and his bloody cohorts could slaughter the few that remained. One would think the killing of a few hundred exhausted men, a much easier task than stopping the sun and moon, or the earth. By the by, we wish to enquire right here, is it a strictly god-like occupation for a deity to stone his offspring to death in that kind of manner? And is that the best use he could put them to?

Now, reader, this narrative is true, or it is false—the idle fancy of a silly brain, unfit alike to edify men and women, or to amuse little children. How stands the evidence? One unknown, nameless, anonymous writer who once lived, but nobody knows when, and nobody knows where, says it was so. Science, philosophy, reason, the negative testimony of many nations, truth and common sense say it is untrue. Which shall we believe? Those with brains, and who are

free to think for themselves, must accept the latter testimony.

In Isaiah xxxviii: 7, 8, a story of similar credibility is narrated, when merely to give Hezekiah a sign that his life should be prolonged fifteen years, the sun not only was stopped, but moved back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. Here we have a reiteration of a similar impossibility. Our Christian friends, however, swallow it as readily as six-year-old children do the tales and melodies of "Mother Goose," and are ready to doom all who cannot, to the endless torments of hell.

Such belief, they assure us, constitutes virtue, and to doubt it is a heinous crime. We are rejoiced, however, to see their idol is losing its hold upon the minds of intelligent men; the sun of reason and truth is breaking through the clouds of ignorance and error, and its course cannot be stayed any more than the sun of the solar system. Mankind will, in due time, emerge from the mists and fogs that for ages have enveloped them, when they will no longer give credence to idle, silly tales that do such gross injustice to the great Source of Life, Light and Truth that permeates and impels every atom in the entire Universe.

"THE TRUTH SEEKER"

Is an outspoken and fearless advocate of Science, Morals, Free Thought and General Reform.

D. M. BENNETT, Editor and Publisher,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

SAMSON AND HIS EXPLOITS.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[From The Truth Seeker of April 15th, 1875.]

Among the stories in the Bible that may well be classed as *improba'le*, is the strange one of Samson and his remarkable muscular strength. His history commenced before his birth or before he was begotten. An angel of God appeared unto his father and mother and predicted they should have a son, that he should be a Nazarite and no razor should touch his head. The woman in due time bore a son and he grew up and the "Lord blessed him."

As is common with other young men, he soon fell in love. He saw a young woman at Timnath, among the Philistines with whom he was well pleased, and he importuned his parents to go down and procure the young lady for him. They consented to do so. He accompanied them and while on the way a lion confront-

ed them, but our young hero was not at all dismayed. His affection for the young Philistine damsel was so ardent as to make him immensely strong, and though the lion roared against him, and though he had no weapons of any kind, and "nothing in his hand," he rent the lion as he would have rent a young kid.

The lion is held to be a most formidable beast, and for agility, quickness and great strength he is not surpassed in the whole animal kingdom. It is remarkable that a young stripling, as Samson was at that time, unarmed, and without even the assistance of a walking-stick or club, could easily demolish the king of beasts. But as the book asserts it, we are perhaps not at liberty to doubt it.

He had the desired interview with the Philistine maiden, and they were mutually pleased with each other. On his return he stopped to look at the carcass of the lion, and found that bees had taken possession of it, and had already accumulated considerable honey, of which he freely partook and gave to his parents. The bees must have been pretty lively in their operations to have taken possession of the carcass and partly filled it with honey in so short a time, or Samson must have unduly protracted his stay with the maiden.

It may be inferred, also, that bees in those days were less fastidious about their dwelling-place than now. Modern bees are too nice and particular to have sweet, clean hives, to take the putrefying carcass of an animal for a home ; nor would our bees permit a person to abstract their hard earnings without vigorously defending their property and severely stinging intruders

Samson gave a riddle pertaining to the lion and the bees on a subsequent visit to the Philistines, and his

young wife gave his visitors the solution, at which he was displeased, and the spirit of the Lord coming upon him, he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty-seven men, and took their spoil and garments and divided them among those who solved the riddle, and his wife was also given away. It seems a little singular that the spirit of the Lord coming upon him should make him so murderous ; but in those days God appears to have been particularly bloodthirsty. Slaughter and carnage seemed to please him better than anything else.

Samson's fox trick is worthy of notice. Wishing to injure the Philistines he caught three hundred foxes and tied them together, tail to tail, and placed a firebrand between every two tails, and after he had lighted the brands he let them go, and they ran through grain fields, setting fire to, and burning all the grain in shocks, all the standing grain and the vineyards and olives as well. Were this story anywhere else than in the Bible it would be pronounced silly and incredible. It is hardly probable a man could catch three hundred foxes, no matter how strong he might be. They are extremely shy and difficult to catch, and a man can hardly be found who could catch a single fox by himself, much less three hundred, and they to stand still while he tied their tails together and attached firebrands to them. It was cruel on the foxes, to say the least. It is not very likely standing grain, vineyards, and olive trees would be set on fire, even if foxes should thus run through them. Growing vines and trees are not easy to ignite. The sap in the twigs and green leaves renders them quite incombustible, and a brand going swiftly by would hardly affect them. The Philistines to be avenged for this cruel wrong took Samson's wife and her father and burned them

with fire, all of which we should call a burning shame.

Samson greatly distinguished himself when his brethren bound him with strong cords and delivered him to his enemies, when he suddenly burst the cords and with the jaw-bone of an ass slew one thousand of them. It was indeed an *ass*-tonishing feat, and never before or since was an ass' jaw-bone known to do such service. What those thousand men were doing while a single man was beating them to death with a jaw-bone we can hardly imagine. It would seem some of them ought to have been able to get in a blow once in a while. That jaw-bone must have been a peculiar one, for after beating a thousand men to death with it, Samson being exhausted and thirsty, asked the Lord for a drink, whereupon "God clave a hollow in the jaw, and there came water thereout" and Samson refreshed himself. It is not often jaw-bones can be found with such fountains of water in them. That specimen of jaw-bone seemed capable of dispensing both life and death. The ass that owned it must have been remarkable, and the jaw-bone still more so.

Samson was probably satisfied with these achievements, for twenty years passed before we hear anything further relative to his feats of strength, until he went to Gaza and had intercourse with a prostitute, and when the Gazites would catch him, at midnight he got up and walked off with the gates and gate-posts of the city as an ordinary man would with an armful of oven-wood.

Like most men in modern times, he had a decided fondness for women, and they got him into great trouble. He fell in love with a fancy woman named Delilah and was fond of dallying with her, and going to

sleep with his head in her lap. After a number of trials on her part to learn where his great strength lay, he misleading her on several occasions, she at length wheedled him into divulging the secret that his great strength lay in his hair ; so when he was again asleep she called in a barber or hair-cutter and had his head shaved clean, and alas, when he awoke he found his strength was gone. The Philistines easily took him and plucked his eyes out, bound him with fetters and made him grind in the prison-house.

But his hair at length grew out again, and he became strong as before ; and when the Philistines gathered together in great numbers to offer sacrifice to their God, and to rejoice that he had delivered Samson unto them, he was called by the people to make sport for them.

He was placed between the main pillars of the temple ; and while the building was full of men and women and three thousand were on the roof, he took one pillar in his right hand and the other in his left, and bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords and upon the people, completely crushing them to death, and himself also.

Now we are free to say we do not believe this remarkable narration, which is detailed by an unknown person, with no corroboration or substantiation save that found in the Jewish scriptures. We do not believe the man ever lived who was able to take the columns of a large temple, one in each hand, and hurl the structure to the ground. It is too big a story for our credulity to accept as truth. There have been many strong, muscular men in the world, but none capable of performing such a feat as that, though their hair was ten feet in length. By the by, it is not in keep-

ing with the known physiological laws that hair imparts immense strength, or that the loss of it produces weakness. There is no special connection between the hair and the muscles. The hair is a desirable covering for the head, and when well dressed is regarded as an ornament, and in health usually grows luxuriantly, but it was never known to impart muscular strength. 'Tis safe to judge of the past by what is known of the present.

Samson is often said to be a plagiarism or copy of Hercules, who was also a mythical character, to whom was imputed very remarkable strength, and who performed astonishing feats. In his infancy while still in the cradle he is said to have strangled venomous serpents, which the jealous Hera sent to destroy him. He is also famed for twelve prodigious exploits performed by himself called "labors," among which were the slaying of a hydra, a boar, a lion, the harpies and other monsters. He had a big club which he is said to have wielded in a most fearful manner. The cleansing of the Augean stables was a feat which has immortalized him. We see there are some points of resemblance between Hercules and Samson, especially in the leonine part of their history. Both had slain their lions. Both also seemed to have been susceptible to the influence of the softer sex. Hercules was enslaved by a passion for Omphale of Lydia who made him spin for her and wear her clothes. The influence she exercised over him was much the same that Delilah wielded over Samson ; thus we see the strongest men are liable in some points to become very weak. Hercules was said to have come to his death by putting on a poisoned shirt given him as a

202

love-charm by his false wife, who had received it from the centaur Nessus.

With the exception of Samson's last feat of pulling the temple down on the heads of ten thousand people with three thousand more upon the roof, Hercules was undoubtedly the greater man of the two, but in that crowning exploit in Samson's career there can be no doubt he threw Hercules completely into the shade. There is an old saying that "the one who tells the last story has the advantage."

While we accord to every person the right to believe either in Hercules or Samson if they choose to do so, we claim for ourselves the right to doubt. We cannot see that we have any more ground to believe there were such men, than Jack the giant-killer, or Sinbad the Sailor. Some unknown writers have stated that such persons once lived, and that is all we know about them. We are at liberty to believe in them, or not just as the proof strikes us. We of course will have to be classed among the unbelievers.

"THE TRUTH SEEKER"

Is an outspoken and fearless advocate of Science, Morals, Free Thought and General Reform.

D. M. BENNETT, Editor and Publisher,
335 Broadway. N. Y.

The Great Wrestling Match.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

In noticing the extraordinary Bible stories which are too impropable to gain our credulity, it is fitting that we should not omit the most remarkable wrestling match that has ever been reported; the parties to which were God and his favored servant, Jacob, as narrated in the thirty-second chapter of Genesis.

After Jacob had tarried twenty years with his father-in-law, Laban, securing his two wives, and by a system of sharp practice in cattie raising, which the world has never anywhere else exhibited, and became very wealthy in flocks, herds, camels, and asses, it seems God had an interview with him in a dream and instructed him to get out of that land and return to his own kindred.

He, accordingly, when his father-in-law was absent from home, shearing sheep, stole away, taking all the wealth he claimed to have made from Laban's posses-

sions, and his wife Rachel stole, also, the gods and images that were her father's. Thus they early showed the disposition for acquiring property—honestly or dishonestly—a reputation which their descendants for centuries have persistently maintained.

When Jacob neared his father's residence, he seemed to have some misgivings as to the kind of reception he would receive from his brother Esau, probably growing out of the sharp game he had played upon him many years before, in the matter of the birth-right and the mess of pottage; and, with his characteristic shrewdness, he sent his servants with valuable presents to Esau to placate him and allay any unfriendly feeling that might linger in his breast toward his long absent brother Jacob. The ruse seems to have been successful, for Esau went out and met Jacob in a commendable brotherly spirit, quite contrary to the fears the latter had entertained.

The most remarkable part of this narrative is the account of the exraordinary wrestling match between God and Jacob during the night immediately succeeding the day on which the presents aforesaid were sent. Jacob seemed to be fearful, notwithstanding the very generous presents he had made to Esau, as to the reception he would meet with, and he rose in the night and sent his two wives, his two concubines and his eleven children and all his treasures over the ford of Jabbok, and he was left alone, and God came in and wrestled with him till the break of day. The match seems not to have been conducted precisely upon the rules which have since governed the prize ring and boxing and wrestling matches. Usually seconds are chosen and an umpire appointed to see that fair play to both sides is secured. In this case

there were no seconds nor umpire—the two wrestlers were alone, with none to witness the contest which for several hours was so evenly kept up. The Bible does not state whether this match was made up on a wager or whether the two wrestled all night simply for sport.

Although in no other parts of the Bible are we told of any remarkable muscular strength or bravery exhibited by Jacob, he must have been one of the most powerful athletes ever known, to hold an even contest with God so vigorously for several hours. It may easily be supposed that any of the most noted acrobats, gymnasts, or prize-fighters that ever lived, would be unable to hold God an even contest for hours, if God did his best. If he would consent to meet the ablest of them in a contest of this kind, had we money to risk on the result, we should bet on God every time.

Jacob, however, must have the credit of acquitting himself remarkably well in the encounter, for God seems to have gained nothing upon him until he took an unfair advantage and put Jacob's hip out of joint. By modern rules such conduct would be called "foul," and would forfeit the game and the "stakes." But God, doubtless, considered it *fair*, or he would not have resorted to that course, especially as daylight had come, and it was important he should be off. He asked Jacob to let him go, but Jacob refused, unless God would comply with his demands, so the putting out of his hip was, perhaps, after all, justifiable.

We recollect in our boyhood days, wrestling was tabooed by the strictest teachers of morality as being of an immoral and objectionable tendency, but if God engaged in it, and gave lessons to a person he was so

partial to as he was to Jacob, we cannot see upon what grounds the exercise can be pronounced immoral. What was done by God and Jacob would seem to be good enough for anybody.

In this instance of God's wrestling with Jacob for hours, he must have been more thoroughly "materialized" than on usual occasions when he exhibited himself. We have accounts of several instances where he made himself visible and talked with men; as in the Garden of Eden, where he walked in the cool of the day and conversed with Adam and Eve, afterwards with Cain, after he murdered Abel, afterwards with Noah in reference to building the ark and shipping his live cargo. He subsequenly appeared to Moses, first, as fire in the burning bush, afterwards on Mount Sinai during the forty days they were up there together cutting the ten commandments on tables of stone. On still another occasion, he showed Moses his back parts. Why he should show his back parts and not his front parts, the account does not state, except that no man could see his face and live. That he had front parts as well as back parts, there cannot be a reasonable doubt, for no personage was ever seen with back parts but what had front parts also.

He consented, however, to put Moses in the cleft of the rock and place his hand over him while he was passing by, letting him see his back parts only, as just stated. It looks to a natural-minded person as though there was a clash between these statements as to God's being seen. That God was seen on several occasions. we have the most positive Bible assurances, and when John says, "No man hath seen him at any time," and Paul says, "No man hath seen him or can see him,"

it would appear they had borne false testimony, or that the person who made the other statements had done so. Though these passages from "God's Word" may seem contradictory to a natural man, to one having spiritual discernment it is to be supposed they are perfectly consistent.

In this wrestling case, though God saw fit to put Jacob's hip out of joint, he did not leave him in that unpleasant predicament without doing something for him in return. Before this time he had simply been called Jacob; but God now gave him the name of "Israel." Jacob may have considered this full compensation for the injury inflicted, but for our own part, we would not have our hip put out of joint for a dozen new names. The two evidently parted in the best of spirits, and Jacob called the place "Peniel, for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved."

The question may arise: If Moses could not see God's face and live, how could Jacob? It must be borne in mind, however, that they were two different men. If Jacob had the muscular strength to hold out against God for hours in a wrestling match, it is not improbable he would have strength enough of the optic nerves to see his face, and not die fron the effects of it.

Seriously, these Bible stories of God's wrestling with men, of his showing his back parts, of his talking face to face with various individuals are significant of the crude age of the world in which they were written. At that time it was supposed the earth was the centre of the Universe, that it was flat and stationary, and that the sun and moon made daily circuits around it, and that the stars were small bodies of

light placed in a solid firmament a short distance from the earth. Their ideas of God were equally as crude and imperfect. They supposed him a being, having the form and appearance of a man, who had a throne above the firmament from which he could oversee all parts of the earth, and who spent much of his time in war and bloodshed, leading one nation against another in the most bloody conflicts, and often betraying one army into the hands of another more cruel, without any adequate reason, and frequently putting scores of thousands to death on a single occasion.

Since the world has learned to have more enlarged and correct views of the Universe ; that the earth is but a very small portion of the solar system, and that the solar system is but a very small fraction of the Universe—that systems and constellations fill the immensity of space in all directions as far as the mind can think, many have come to entertain grander conceptions of deity than those crude notions of him held by Jacob, and Moses, and Joshua.

When it is remembered that the earth not only revolves on its axis at the rate of one thousand miles an hour, but that in its course around the sun it flies with a velocity of more than a thousand miles a minute, and that the entire solar system is rushing with an accelerated velocity in another direction around a much greater and far distant sun, the inconsistency of the idea of a local God, seated on a fixed throne in some particular point in the heavens can be easily comprehended.

When we realize that the same deity that presides in our land must necessarily be equally present on every side of our globe and through it, and not only

the same in the sun, and moon and planets, but in the numberless other systems and worlds, in the distant constellation of Orion and millions of others, still billions of times further removed—in all these trillions of worlds just as much as here—we can perhaps have a faint conception of the utter absurdity of the theory of olden times that God is an organized being, who occupies a single point in immensity; that his attention is given specially to the affairs of a single nation of roving brigands, that he was fickle, cruel, revengeful and malicious, and that he spent any portion of his time in a wrestling contest with Jacob, or in showing his back parts to Moses.

The more appreciative are our ideas of this boundless Universe, the more expanded will be our conception of an unorganized, impersonal, ever-present Deity, wherever matter and worlds and space exist.

The Truth Seeker Tracts.

If you want terse, trenchant reading matter, to act as "Eye-openers," in doing "Missionary Work," convenient to hand to neighbors, friends and all enquiring persons, send for a supply of these valuable little evangels of truth.

They range in price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount is made to those purchasing in quantities. They are so low in price, that thousands of generous-hearted persons can afford to buy them for gratuitous distribution. Too many of them cannot be spread broadcast over our land. Sent, post-paid, by mail.

Published by D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

A DISCUSSION

BETWEEN

ELDER J. C. SHELTON, of Alabama,

AND

THE EDITOR OF THE TRUTH SFEKER,

UPON NOAH'S FLOOD AND OTHER TOPICS.

[The following appeared in The Truth Seeker of March 15, 1875.

We recently received the following pious, but not very gentlemanly letter, from a zealous Christian Elder in Alabama. If he had a little less *faith* and somewhat more of good manners, we think he would be considerably benefited by the change. We forgive him for the lack of courtesy he exhibits, presuming he has done as well as he knew how. It is by no means uncommon for members of the clergy to forget to be gentlemen, and to deem it perfectly right to be

insolent toward unbelievers. We "consider the source." etc.:

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT CO., ALA., Feb. 10, 1875.

MR. D. M. BENNETT :—Sir: Some of your poor, foolish, deluded readers of your abominable stuff, called THE TRUTH SEEKER, handed me No. 4 Vol. 2d, printed Oct. 15th 1874, in which you tried to make sport of the Bible account of the flood. Now we don't wish to try to enter into any arguments with a man who does not believe, or is liar enough to say there is no God, but will simply state that the power that brought on the flood, first created the animals and also Noah and his family, and of course that *Power* was sufficient to preserve those animals on the amount of food that Noah was directed to take into the Ark. But a man of your great self-conceited sense and learning might say there never was any flood.

I say there was just such a flood in times past as is represented in the Bible, and I am going to prove it by your God (Matter). Close to me in Blount county, Ala., is a man by the name of H. Scott, who lives on a small freestone gravely ridge, This man Scott, last Summer digs a well, close to his house on this small ridge, and when he gets down some 36 or 37 feet, digging through clay and gravel, he comes to a chestnut stump that has been broken off from the main body of the tree, also limbs of trees imbedded in rich soil some two and a half or three feet thick, with a black, brackish water oozing out of the soil. He continued his well below this, through clay and gravel some thirty feet, and got no water, he then goes about one hundred yards farther on this same ridge and digs another well, and he comes to the same black soil with timber, &c., which hundreds of people can witness to. Also there is no large water course in twenty miles of these wells. Also there was another well dug in four miles of this place, and there was an Elevated ridge west of this well close by; some thirty or forty feet down in the well the man came to a poplar log near two feet through. There was a skeptical man in our county that did not believe in a Bible flood, and he also would not believe that the log was in the well until he went down and examined for himself. These evidences show conclusively, that

there was a great flood once, that washed the dirt and gravel from the high ridges and formed these small ridges on top of this soil and timber where these wells have been dug.

But Sir, you in your self-conceited logic, will say that this timber would not last from the time of Noah's flood until now. But my logic says that when *matter* of any kind is entirely excluded from the action of the air that it will remain in that condition thousands of ages. So the Christian has abundant proof of the flood, and the truth of the Bible, but you have nothing but your Infidel prejudices against it. If a man will cavel at the Bible, and Christian Religion, he must do so as much as the devil will give him power to do. There are some men who can find no wisdom anywhere, except in their own heads. Such men, however, are no judges of wisdom. We should not set up a *Mouse* to explain the great phenomenon of the Earth's creation and formation. It is necessary that a man should be honest at least, and have a share of common sense before Christians need to discuss with them. A man that is born with his eyes open, and can look around on all created things, and say there is no God, no Christ, no Hell, no pure and vital Christian religion, is either a fool or a notorious lying *Monster*, who would wantonly tear down everything that would give a foundation to truth, morality, virtue and a civil Government ; and none but poor, deluded, sinful, degraded men will take, read or countenance such men's trashy writings.

Sir, your trashy Infidel notions can do the true Christian no harm, and especially in the world to come, because, according to your teaching of things, even bad Christians and the HEATHENS of the *Heath* will have as quiet a sleep in a state of nonentity, when this life ends, as you Infidels, but on the other hand, if you are wrong, an eternal hell will be your portion. What is the use for an Infidel to say anything about the Bible, when according to their notions, mankind is just as safe without it as with it? Sir, we are fearful you are making merchandize of men's souls, and we are fearful you don't care so you make a living by it in the present world. It is the blind leading the blind, and all will fall into the ditch. It would

be far better for you, if you would leave off your writing even if you had to take hold of the plow and the grubbing hoe for an honest living.

Do just as you please with this composition, and be sure to read it every night before you say your Prayers.

Yours in Christian sincerity, ELD. J. C. SHELTON.

REPLY.—Our Christian Elder evidently thinks he has given us a "knock down" argument in favor of Noah's flood, but if he has nothing better to offer in proof of it than a poplar log or two in a gravel ridge, we fear the world will still remain in doubt as to that remarkable freshet. Doubtless he has stated the facts correctly as to the finding of the logs, and it is also a good argument that at some unknown time, in the past, a flood or floods have occured in that locality. That local floods have taken place in nearly all parts of this and other countries there are too many proofs to admit of a doubt. That great changes in the topography of the American continent have occured in the past we have the strongest evidence. These have been produced by floods, and alluvial deposits in the mouths and the deltas of rivers, and more especially by tremendous upheavals that have from time to time occurred. In very early times the American continent was, doubtless, largely under water. That much of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska and other States, were once thus submerged, there is abundance of evidence. The character of the prairie soil presents strong proof that it was once the bed of the sea. Sea shells have often been found in hills and elevated grounds one hundred feet at least above present water lines.

The upheavals of this continent have been tremendous; the extensive mountain ranges of the Allegha-

nies, the Andes, and the Rocky mountains, with the volcanoes and volcanic debris so frequently found, afford the strongest evidence of this. This, in part, is the explanation of the deposits of gravel, earth and rock so often found over the coal strata of Pennsylvania and other coal districts. That these deposits or stratifications have been caused to some extent by local floods, but far more by upheavals, there is no room for doubt. Prostrate trees of different kinds of wood —similar to the cases mentioned by our correspondent —have frequently been found in various parts of the country. Whole trees even, perfect in form, though changed in character, have been found imbedded in strata of coal, but it is in nowise probable they were indebted to Noah's flood for such imbedment.

We readily admit the facts asserted about the buried logs, but utterly fail to see how they prove that in Noah's time the earth was covered over its entire surface with water to the depth of five miles ; that the animals and birds from all latitudes and zones of the earth gathered together of their own accord, and voluntarily marched into the ark in pairs or sevens, lions and calves, wolves and lambs, dogs and rabbits, cats and mice, hawks and chickens, swallows and flies, poisonous serpents and gentle doves, in all, over three hundred thousand animals—fowls and insects of all varieties of character and disposition—crowded into an ark pitched without and within, with a single door and window, and they closed, and thus deprived of air, light and appropriate food, they remained over a year—Noah's family, stench, filth and all. If our friend's poplar log convinces him that all this occurred, perhaps it also reveals to him where all the water came from that covered the earth to the depth of five

miles; where it was stored previous to its descent, and where it went to when dry land again appeared! He is probably one of those credulous mortals full of "saving faith," who can just as easily believe that Jonah swallowed the whale, as that the whale swallowed Jonah, if the book only says so. We, will, however, take this occasion to assure Elder Shelton that, in maintaining so zealously that the flood occurred just as related in Genesis, he is entirely antagonistic to the position on this subject now held by his more intelligent brethren of the cloth in this locality. We fear he is getting behind the times. No intelligent orthodox clergyman of New York or Brooklyn now claims that the Bible account of the deluge must be understood literally. They hold Genesis to be merely a poem, or fable, or legend, and that it is not longer to be regarded as incumbent on the Christian to believe its literal language. Rev. De Witt Talmage, one of our most prominent clergymen, not long since said quite as much in his pulpit, and insisted that skeptics and Liberals in representing enlightened Christian clergymen as adhering to the letter of the Genesis narrative were wrong and slanderous, and that a very small portion of the learned, sensible clergy now preach the Bible account of creation and the flood. In the advances made by science, it is difficult for a man of sense and education, though he be a clergyman, to longer insist that the story narrated in Genesis is true.

Brother Shelton, the world is progressing; the old fogy notions of the past are gradually yielding to the good sense of to-day; mythology and fable are giving place to scientific truths and reason. You had better study up a little, and take a few steps forward, or we

fear you will be left away behind among the stumps and pitfalls of the Dark Ages.

[The following appeared in THE TRUTH SEEKER of May 1, 1875.]

Elder Shelton Once More.

Our pious, Hard-shell Alabama Elder has again favored us with the following brilliant effusions. While we cannot for a moment doubt his implicit faith in the big stories of the Bible and the dogmas of orthodox Christianity, we regret he has not studied more closely the manners of a gentleman. Why need he call attention to our long ears? By the way, does he really know we have long ears? Will he risk a pint of peanuts that, by actual measurement, our ears are longer than his? We make room for what the pious man of faith has to say.

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT CO., ALA., April 5th, 1875.

MR. D. M. BENNETT, *Sir:*—I would not write to you at present, but seeing some of your Philosophical nonsense, together with some of your low, vulgar, satiracal slang, used by you in the place of argument against my Article written in defense of a Scriptural Flood, I now proceed to write, not that I expect to convince such a wise man as you are, who has in his own estimation got all the Oracles of Wisdom treasured up in his own cranium. But I write in order to try to reach some of your readers, whom I trust have not gone so far away from the revealed word of God. I feel sorry for all men that are in total darkness and are lost. Now, *Sir*, you tried to answer my Article written on fourth page TRUTH SEEKER, printed March 15th, 1875, by first speaking of my harshness and uncourtiousness in my argument. I will make some

opologies for that, by mearly stating that Christians sometimes have to deal very roughly with *Long Eared Brutes.* Now, *Sir*, if a man will but once admit that there is a Creator, who has created all things, he must admit that this same Creator can do anything that he wants to do, even if it is to bring on a big flood, such as was in Noah's time. Now we believe that the flood was altogether a *miracle* wrought out by God in order to show wicked, unbelieving men, in the early existence of the world, that he was God. Now Mr. Editor if God had not performed such huge *Miracles*, all along in the early age of the world, men never would have been convinced that there was a God. They all would have been poor, ignorant, benighted creatures, such as Infidel writers and Deists are in the present day.

Secondly, you tried to meet our arguments by stating that there has been some tremendous upheavals in the Earth, which has caused Timber, Animals, etc., to be found in places deep under the Earth. Now, *Sir*, I deny that there has ever been any upheavals of the Earth since the flood. The Bible does tell us that the fountain of the great deep was broken up, and this is the only upheavals that ever was. Sir, I defy you to prove by living witnesses that any such upheavals have ever taken place in North America. I am not going to allow you to bring up the blind ideas of philosophy. I want you to understand that a *Learned* fool, and a philosophical fool, is the biggest fool of all fools. Don't talk to me of volcanic upheavals in the old world, which only turn up Dirt and Rock enough to make an opening for the melted Lava to issue forth, that argument will be too thin for a man of your paper.

Again, you ask where did such an amount of water come from to make this mighty flood, and where did it go to when the flood was over, &c. That is a mighty foolish question to ask a faithful Christian. The Christian knows and has faith enough to believe that God can prepare water enough to drown a thousand such worlds as this, if he saw proper by that act, to convince all intelligent beings that he is a Sovereign God. See how many intelligent men and women that have come into the world since the flood, that have been noble-hearted Christians in con-

sequence of the every-day proof of that flood being found all over the Earth.

Again you ask, how is it possible for the number of animals that was taken into the Ark to live when there was but one door and window in the Ark. SIR, we answer you by saying that they were sustained by the same *power* that preserved Jonah in the whale's belly. We can only account for it on the ground that it is a miracle wrought out by God, in order to save a remnant to repeople the earth again with better people. It seems, Mr. *Editor*, that the people before the flood had become to a vast extent just such unbelievers and Deists as you and THE TRUTH SEEKER are, which justly enkindled the wrath of God against them, and he determined to sweep them off and save eight christians, to wit, Noah and his family, in order to re-people the earth with better folks. And *Sir*, I will say to you to-day, that if the people of the world as a general thing were to become believers in your doctrine, God would get awfully mad at us again, and would sweep us off again by a flood of fire or water in less than twenty-four hours. But we are thankful that there is still a few Josephs, Elijahs, Rebeccas and Marys in the world. Though Christianity has its *Beechers*, the world of mankind knows that *they* are only Infidels at heart, while they hiypocritically take upon *them* the cloke of christianity. And Mr. Editor you say a great deal in your collums about *Beecher*, in order as you think to, to throw a slur on Christians. Sir, I say to you that all men would more or less become Beechers if they believed as you do. Beecher is just such a man as you are, at heart, *an unbeliever*, only he tries to put on a Christian cloak to deceive the world. Sir, if your doctrine of Infidelity was believed by every body, it would make miserable Prostitutes of the female sex and miserable Beechers of the men, because the fear of God and a burning hell would not be before their Eyes. Sir, your system of belief makes miserable cut-throats, and robbers, out of men and miserable base creatures out of women. This is the reason why, in Alabama, such men as you are not allowed to give testimony in open court against any one; from the fact that the public does not believe that such a man would swear the truth, especially if he was interested in the case. And

justly too, from the very fact, that there is no foundation in such men for the truth, from the fact that there is no fear of God and his judgments in their minds, consequently we had as well swear one of those creatures that Baalam rode, and expect to get the truth out of it, as to swear an Infidel. Now, Sir you profess not to believe one word that is written in the Bible. Now, we know what you don't believe, now please tell us what you do believe. And we defy you to undertake with *truth* to prove what you think you do believe. Now if you and your readers won't have the Bible, please give us something that is better, as you go along, or the world won't have it.

Now Sir, if you undertake to reply to this Article, be serious about it, and don't try to poke fun at us and the Bible instead of argument. If there is any sollid argument about you, let us have it, and don't give us suppositions for truths. ELDER J. C. SHELTON.

REPLY.—There!—if that is not a regular Simon-pure Christian letter, what is it? It abounds in *faith* and *ignorance*, and these are certainly Christian characteristics. True, there are forty or fifty errors of orthography, capitalization, and bad grammar, and a dozen or two misrepresentations and prevarications, or, "not to put too fine a point upon it"—*lies*. But those are not un-Christian; they are just what the system is made up of.

The Elder has spread himself considerably, and evidently wants us to reply to him. He is specially anxious that we be serious about it, and use solid arguments. We hope we shall treat his letter in a proper spirit, and be at least as courteous in language as he has been to us. We do not wish to be outdone by him in politeness, truthfulness, or gentlemanliness.

We will notice some of his inaccuracies:

First. He intimates we used low, vulgar slang in our former reply to him. It is wrong for the dominie to so misrepresent us. It is neither just nor true.

We used no slang nor improper language towards him.

Second. He says in our "own estimation, we have all the oracles of wisdom treasured up in our own cranium." He could not have made a greater mistake. We are painfully sensible that there is very much that we do not know, and we here acknowledge the fact with becoming humility.

Third. He says "there have been no upheavals since the flood." Wrong again! Earthquakes have many times taken place. The surface of the earth has frequently been elevated in some places and depressed in others. Islands have risen in the ocean that were once unknown.

Fourth. He says "a learned fool and a philosophical fool is the biggest of all fools." False and absurd! The most of a fool is he who knows nothing. If he has learning and philosophy, he certainly is less a fool than he who possesses them not. The Elder must take care that his readers do not class him with those who have neither learning nor philosophy.

Fifth. He says "the Christian knows that God can prepare water enough to drown one thousand such worlds as this." The Elder rather stretches the truth here. The Christian knows nothing of the kind! Let him contract a little and make it five hundred. That number will, we think, a good deal more than cover the Christian's absolute knowledge.

Sixth. He attempts to prove the flood by the story of Jonah and the whale. Ah! Elder, that will not do! You might as well undertake to prove "Old Mother Hubbard" by "Jack the Giant-Killer."

Seventh. He says "there were just such unbelievers before the flood as we and THE TRUTH SEEKER are." Another mistake. The Elder is simply drawing upon

his imagination. He has not the papers for that. Our sort had not come into fashion at that early day.

Eighth. He says "God got mad at his creatures." We assert that this is false, and very unjust to God. True, the Bible makes such a statement, but it is wrong. God does not *get mad* nor fly into a passion. All such statements, wherever found, are grossly incorrect. God never gets mad, nor runs crazy. He would be unfit to govern the Universe if that was his character.

Ninth. He says we are such a man as Beecher is. Has it come to this? Is it our fate to be thus accused? Are our grey hairs thus to be brought down in sorrow to the grave? We call on the Elder for proof. Let him show when we have ever been in the Beecher business, or the paroxysmal business. What families have we broken up? What Elizabeths have we ever been after? When did we ever perjure ourselves? We have received many stabs and thrusts, but this is the unkindest cut of all.

Tenth. He says "Infidelity makes miserable prostitutes of the female sex." A greater falsehood never was uttered! The women who have embraced Infidelity have been pure and virtuous, and ornaments to society. We have only to point to Harriet Martineau, Margaret Fuller, Frances Wright, and thousands now living, to prove the Elder a clerical slanderer and falsifier. What a cheek the man must have to claim all the virtue for Christian women, and deny it to Infidels, when want of chastity exists in almost every church in the land. A paper can hardly be taken up now, but what we find an account of some sister in some church being on too intimate sexual relations with the shepherd of the fold, some godly clergyman. And this Elder has the assurance to tell us that Infi-

delity will make all the women do that way. He ought to be ashamed of such vile slanders.

Eleventh. He says our system of belief "makes miserable cut-throats and robbers of men." False as hell! Not a word of truth in it, and none but a liar can make such an assertion. Those who have had the intelligence to doubt the errors of superstition, and the honesty to avow their sentiments, have been the noblest men the world has known. We claim as ours all who have not believed in Christianity, and we are proud to acknowledge them the noblest moral heroes and benefactors of our race. We begin back with Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Zeno, Aristotle, Marcus Antoninus, Cicero, Seneca, and come down to Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Condorcet, Spinoza, Descartes, Gibbon, Diderot, Voltaire, Volney, Shelley, Helvetius, Goethe, Schiller, Humboldt, Byron, Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, Ethan Allen, Parker, J. Stuart Mill, Buckle, Lecky, Tylor, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Helmholtz, Lincoln, Sumner, Schmidt, Draper, Fiske, and a host of others that might be named. They are among the grandest men that ever lived. They were not Christians, and did not require the fear of a devil nor hell to keep them from being cut-throats and robbers, as the Elder tacitly admits Christians do.

Who are they who people our prisons and penitentiaries?—Christians. Infidels are seldom found there. Who are the murderers?—Christians, or they become so after the deed is done. Very few Infidels are numbered among the murderers. Who have been the cut-throats of the world? Who have shed the most blood?—Christians, two to one. They have taken scores of millions of lives, and caused human blood to flow in rivers, for centuries together. When have In-

fidels done anything like this? Talk, indeed, about the great virtue of Christianity, and the bloodthirstiness of Infidels! The thing is preposterous. There are no more honest, honorable class of men than Infidels, who discard alike the fear of hell, a devil, and a maddened Deity, who flies into a rage at trifles, and kills and destroys innocent people and children by thousands and hundreds of thousands. No class of men excel Christians in villainy, dishonesty, and rascality. No nations are more dishonest and unjust than Christian nations.

We were a few days ago conversing with a gentleman connected with the Navy, and stationed many years in Japan. He had been nearly two hundred miles in the interior. We asked him abont the religion and habits of the country. He informed us a large share are Buddhists, who are absolute Infidels and disbelievers in revelation or a personal God. Christianity, though it has sent many missionaries there, has obtained very slight foothold. He assured us the people are very intelligent, virtuous and happy. Stealing, robbery and murder seldom occur. Locks or fastenings are not generally used on dwellings or stores. The goods and chattels of one are rarely disturbed by another. Though some of the lower class go naked, adultery and sexual promiscuity are almost unknown. In heathen China, also, travelers tell us the people are very industrious and honest. Stores are often left open and unattended. The goods are marked, and if a person wants anything he leaves money to the amount of the price and takes the goods. How would such a system answer in any Christian country in the world? How long would the goods remain? How much money would be left in place of

them ? The Elder must try and keep nearer the truth. Christian virtue and Christian honesty will not do to tie to, as too many have cause to know.

Twelfth. He says "Infidels have no foundation for truth," and argues that consequently they must swear to a lie. This is false and base. Infidels have as great respect for the truth as any class of men that live. They love truth, honor and virtue for their own sakes, not because of an angry God whose judgments may be hurled upon them. Give us one real lover of truth who follows it from the reverence and respect he bears it, rather than six cringing slaves who only tell the truth from fear of some God or some Devil.

Thirteenth. Elder Shelton says we profess not to believe a word that is in the Bible. That is an "awful whopper." We do n't profess any such thing. We believe many words and many sentences the Bible contains, just as much as the Elder himself does. It is not difficult for us to believe such passages as these: "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." "Wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness." "The churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood." These passages are not perhaps as elegant as many quotations that might be made from Shakespeare, Byron, Tennyson, and scores of writers, but nevertheless we believe them, and many other similar extracts, not because they are in the Bible, but because they contain the evidence of truth.

We do not therefore take the Bible as a guide in the study of astronomy, geology, chemistry, physi-

ology, botany, or natural history. We do not look into it to learn the multiplication table, or how to extract the square root. We find it of no use in agricultural pursuits, in the art of printing, or the science of telegraphy. It gives no instruction relative to railroads, or the power of steam. We find nothing in it touching photography, galvanism, the telescope, the spectroscope, or the microscope, but a great deal about wars, carnage, and bloodshed, and much of obscenity and vulgarity. We judge it was written in a barbarous age of the world by men of limited knowledge, and if it ever was adapted to the wants of men in any age of the world, it was long ago; and that if it was of any great value then it has long ceased to be so. We cannot for a moment believe God ever wrote it, or employed any other persons to write it. It is doing great discredit to him to charge it upon him. To do him justice in this matter is one reason we occupy the position we do.

Elder Shelton's letter contains several other misstatements, but we will let them pass. He asks us so earnestly to tell what we believe, we will try and comply with his request. We wish to be obliging so far as possible. We have no views we want to conceal. If we can say anything to enlighten him or any others who are in the dark, we will say it most cheerfully.

First. We think he asks too much, that we admit there is a Creator who made the Universe in six days from nothing. We can admit nothing of the kind. We do not believe there is one atom of matter in existence that is either destructible or creatable. That it may change forms and conditions thousands of times we readily concede, but not by the combined skill of all the scientists in the world can an atom of

it be forced out of existence, nor can a similar atom by any known power be brought into existence. If Elder Shelton and the other sixty thousand clergymen in the United States, and the five hundred thousand priests in the different varieties of religions on earth, together with the one hundred millions of priests which are estimated to have lived and preyed upon man in the last five thousand years; if all these were gods and worked in concert, we do not believe they could make a Universe of nothing. By the by, this Universe is a big thing to make. The sun, the earth, and all the other planets, asteroids, and satellites, are but an infinitesimal portion of the Universe, whose millions of suns and systems reach so far into the abyss of space that it would require light, traveling at the rate of 200,000 miles per second, millions of years to travel from them to our solar system. As distant as these farther suns are, space and the Universe still extend trillions of times farther, and so on forever without limit, without end. What absurdity to talk about all this being made by a being and from nothing!

The Elder says *if* we admit there is a Creator who has done all this, then we must admit he could create the water to drown this world. Ah! but there's the trouble. That *if* is in the way. We can admit nothing of the kind.

We can comprehend *his* Deity is a very watery one, and that his belief in his God's ability to make water is unlimited, but a body of water five miles in depth—for it is that distance to the top of the highest mountain—over the entire earth—25,000 miles in circumference—is an immense quantity, and we cannot comprehend how one God could make it all in forty days and

nights. Our friend, however, gets along with the difficulty easily enough, and stands ready to believe God could make a thousand times as much more if he only felt like it. If the old legend had stated that, to produce this water, God had planted a cucumber vine and that from one of its fruits he had squeezed water enough to cover the entire earth to the tops of the highest mountains, and then to get rid of it he had from a bed-bug made a frog, which drank the water all up and then jumped off out of the way, Elder Shelton doubtless could have believed it perfectly easy. There is nothing like implicit faith. We, however, are differently constituted. We cannot believe impossibilities. If we admit there is a God we hold he must be subject to laws, and that *all* things cannot be possible with him. For instance, he cannot make twice two to be five ; he cannot make a straight rod just three feet long without two ends; he cannot make two mountains without a valley between ; he cannot make a three years old colt in five minutes ; he cannot act against himself ; he cannot commit absurdities ; he cannot make something of nothing.

It is idle, perhaps, to conjecture what God is, or what he is not. It is a subject beyond our reach, but for ourselves we are satisfied he is not such a being as Elder Shelton and others who draw their ideas from the Bible, suppose him to be. And before we can admit miracle No. 2 was performed because miracle No. 1 was, we must be convinced that No. 1 was a reality. We view it as a very weak argument that the truth of all absurdities and monstrosities must be admitted because "all things are possible with God."

In nearly all the religions of the world *miracles* have been assumed and claimed to prove the religions

true. The greater the ignorance of the people, the more the miracles have been urged. The Jewish Scriptures were far from being first in this business. Not one of all these miracles was ever true. Not one was ever possible. The hydropathic one that Elder Shelton believes in so strongly turned out to be particularly futile—labor completely thrown away. Mankind afterwards continued right on as wicked as before, and the wholesale drowning of men, women, and children, animals, birds, insects, and all vegetation was worse than useless. The Elder's claim that it made mankind know God is as silly as the rest of the story. The world has never known God, and even to this day it remains in total ignorance of him. God-makers and worshipers have told all manner of tales about Him, but unfortunately they knew not a particle more about Him than the masses. All have been in the dark together.

We would suggest that if God wanted to send a flood upon the earth, a flood of knowledge would have been better than a flood of water. It would have been immensely more profitable to the inhabitants of the earth, and inconceivably less cruel to children, babes, horses, cattle, sheep, kittens, doves, larks, linnets, nightingales, and millions of other kinds of beasts, birds, and insects which had done nothing to cause a reasonable god to send death and extermination upon them. A flood of knowledge even at this day would do a vast amount of good. We believe the people down in Alabama would be benefited by it. Elder Shelton himself would, perhaps, not be injured by such a flood. If they were in that State well suffused with such a flood, they would, doubtless, be willing honest Infidels should testify in courts of law.

One of the greatest mistakes Elder Shelton and his Christian friends make, is in imputing demoniacal characteristics and conduct to the God of the Universe. They make him cruel, malicious, revengeful, and bloodthirsty enough for a first-class devil. The trouble is they have mistaken God altogether—they have adopted the Jewish deity, Jehovah, and try to pass him off for the God of the Universe. A greater error could not be made. They are totally unlike, and it is the greatest injustice to the God of the Universe to displace him with the Jewish god Jehovah, the older Hindu god Brahma, the Egyptian god Osiris, the Grecian god Jupiter, the Scandinavian god Odin, or any of the thousands of other gods invented by mankind. What the world needs to do, is to discard all these ancient gods of superstition and ignorance, and revere the only God that exists, the God of the Universe and whose highest expression is in Humanity, exalted and enobled by knowledge, truth, and good lives.

Second. We deem it unreasonable that Elder Shelton requires us to prove by living witnesses that upheavals have ever taken place on this continent, when he ought to know that the man who was here when that little commotion took place has been dead several years. The Elder does not believe that the Andes, the Rocky Mountains, the Alleghanies, the Catskills, the White Mountains, and all the other mountains on the continent were once thrown up by internal convulsions produced by the formation of various gasses, but that it did once occur there is the strongest proof in the world. The strata of limestone, sandstone, granite, conglomerate, etc., the natural position of which is comparatively level, are found where these

upheavals have occurred, in all conceivable angles and sometimes even perpendicular, and often carried hundreds of feet above the same strata in adjacent localities, showing the force producing the rupture must have been tremendous. Our good Elder, however, finding nothing of this in the Bible, cannot believe a word of it. But as long as this very rational theory is sustained by such learned scholars and close students of nature as Lyell, Hitchcock, Humboldt, Miller, Denton, and other learned geologists, who have spent their lives in investigating the subject, we shall be compelled to be guided by them, though even Elder Shelton should exclaim, "what fools they all are to disagree with me," and "a learned fool is much more of a fool than an unlearned one like myself."

It is indeed an ignorant person that will insist that there have been no topographical changes upon the earth. They have taken place on a large scale not only on this hemisphere, but on the Eastern also. Some have been sudden and explosive, as when mountain ranges have been thrown up, others have been gradual and almost imperceptible. Professor Draper, one of the ripest scholars of our time, in his "Intellectual Development of Europe," in touching upon this subject gives a clear statement of the changes that have taken place upon the Eastern continent. He says: "For countless ages Asia has experienced a slow upward movement, not only affecting her own topography but likewise that of her European dependency. There was a time when the great sandy desert of Gobi was the bed of the sea which communicated through the Caspian with the Baltic, as may be proved not only by existing geographical facts, but also from geological considerations. It is only necessary

for this purpose to inspect the imperfect maps that have been published of the silurian or even the tertiary period. The vertical displacement of Europe during and since the last period, has indisputably been more than 2,000 feet in many places. There is not a shore in Europe which does not give evidence of changes: the mouths of the Rhine, as they were in Roman times are obliterated; the eastern coast of England has been cut away for miles. In the Mediterranean the shore-line is altogether changed; towns once on the coast are far away inland; others have sunk beneath the sea. Islands, like Rhodes, have risen from the bottom. The North Adriatic, once a deep gulf, has now become shallow; there are leaning towers and inclining temples that have sunk with the settling of the earth. On the opposite extremity of Europe the Scandinavian peninsula furnishes an instance of slow secular motion, the northern part rising gradually above the sea at the rate of about four feet in a century. This elevation is observed through a space of many hundred miles, increasing towards the north. The southern extremity on the contrary, experiences a slow depression.

"These slow movements are nothing more than what have been going on for numberless ages. Since the tertiary period two-thirds of Europe have been lifted above the sea. The Norway coast has been elevated 600 feet, the Alps have been upheaved 2,000 to 3,000, the Apennines 1,000 to 2,000. The country between Mont Blanc and Vienna has been thus elevated since the adjacent seas were peopled with existing animals."

The same causes which have produced these results upon the Eastern continent have produced similar results on the Western. Where we now find high

grounds and even hills we have indubitable proofs that they were once a part of the ocean. Even in the short time our history extends into the past, changes in the mouths and deltas of our rivers, and shiftings in the sea-coasts have unmistakably occurred. The main upheavals, causing the mountain ranges of the continent to rise, may have occurred millions of years ago, but that they did once take place we shall continue to believe, Elder Shelton to the contrary notwithstanding. We shall accord to the geologists and scientists we have mentioned far more credibility than we possibly can to the pious Elder, who is evidently guided more by blind faith in that which he knows nothing of, than by education and knowledge.

Third. We think it rather unkind in the Elder to "go back" in the way he does upon Brother Beecher. How would he like it, if he was sitting upon the ragged edge of despair and remorse, to have his brothers of the cloth turn their backs upon him? Many eminent clergymen have been just as bad as Henry Ward, but were not all so unlucky as to be caught just as he was. How do we know but Elder Shelton himself may not sometime have been just a little bit imprudent and loved the sisters of the fold a little too well? He ought to be more charitable toward an erring brother, and not cast stones unless he is sure he is without fault himself; and even then it would perhaps be unkind. He seems to doubt the genuineness of Brother Henry's orthodoxy. True, the Plymouth pastor has said some funny things and uttered some singular sentiments, but certainly he is all right on Jesus and the Holy Ghost. He goes very strong upon those, and in the sportsman's language, they are the "best cards in the pack." In fact, Henry Ward and

the Holy Ghost have some points of resemblance, if all reports are true; both have been attracted by females, both are said to be great comforters, both operate in secret, and both have engaged in the "overshadowing business." We hope the Elder will excuse us for the opinion that, in point of knowledge and talent, Henry Ward Beecher knows more in a minute than J. C. Shelton does in a week. He certainly ought to stick to him like a brother. The Plymouth pastor needs the sympathizing aid of every friend, lay and clerical; let not Elder Shelton desert him.

Fourth. Our friend asks us to point out what books we believe better than the Bible. That is rather of a heavy contract, and we will not undertake it. There are so many, our columns would not be sufficient to contain the titles. We will, however, indicate a few. We think the Spelling-book, the Reader, the Grammar and Arithmetic are better than many parts of the Bible. Works on Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, Physiology, Botany, History and all the Sciences are better. Among the special authors we would prefer to the Bible, are Shakespeare, Pope, Byron, Moore, Burns, Combe, Macauley, Buckle, Leckey, Froude, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Mill, Tyndall, Fiske, Draper, Emerson and many, many others. These teach a man something he ought to know, and the knowledge improves him and leads him on to higher and grander elevations of usefulness. Whereas with the Bible there is no advance in knowledge or progress. It presupposes man was made faultless and upright at first, but that in a few hours he fell into great disgrace and degradation, and with all the help that gods and angels have been able to extend to him, he has not yet near recovered the position from which he fell,

Science and knowledge are what the world needs to help us on in our upward journey, and they are ever calling us up higher and higher. But the Bible remains on the low plane whence it emanated, maintaining its same crudities and imperfections, its same silly and obscene stories, illy calculated as they are to enlarge the mental calibre of the world, or to impart knowledge, usefulness or value. The Bible is a reflex of the ignorance and superstition of past ages with no provision for progress or advance in knowledge, and is far behind the more reliable, needful, practical and truthful information which science is to-day giving the world.

Fifth. We think, inasmuch as they are Christians who believe in Christ, and that there could have been no Christians before Christ, it is a singular process by which the Elder makes Christians of Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives. Let us enquire if Noah was a Christian, was it a proof of it when he got drunk and lay naked in his tent in a drunken sleep, and when afterward he cursed his son Ham for laughing at him when in that condition, thus dooming the innocent descendants of Ham to abject servitude and degradation for thousands of years?

Sixth. We are decidedly of the opinion that Elder Shelton, like thousands of other Christians, is greatly behind the spirit of the age in still hugging to his bosom the antiquated and absurd fables and vagaries of past barbarous ages under the vain delusion that, in those old legends and unreliable stories, he finds true wisdom and knowledge. It is getting along too far in the Nineteenth Century to give preference to the idle, exaggerated tales of three thousand years ago, written, as they were, by persons who scarcely

had the first glimpses of scientific truth, in place of the advanced thought and scientific research of far abler minds of the present day.

Priests, as a rule, are slow to accept the teachings of science. For centuries they have zealously fought it with acrimony and hate, knowing well it is calculated to lessen their rule over the minds of men. But in spite of their opposition, in spite of the fetters they have sought to place upon the growing limbs of young science, she has already far outgrown their reach, and bids fair soon to liberate the world from this rule of bondage which for so many centuries priestcraft has fastened upon it. We hail the auspicious promise of the near future of the world, and would gladly see all Priests and Elders throw away the effete errors and mythological absurdities of olden times, and embrace the better teachings of truth and reason which are illuminating the mental and moral horizon.

We are pleased in some directions to see indications of progress and intelligence on the part of the clergy. The Rev. T. W. Fowle, M.A., Vicar of St. Luke's, Natford Place, London, in a work of over four hundred pages, recently published under the title of *The Reconciliation of Religion and Science*, and which was dedicated to the Dean of Stanley, a dignitary of the Church of England, next perhaps in authority to the Archbishop of Canterbury, gives utterance to most advanced and liberal sentiments when we consider the contracted and sectarian views the clergy usually take upon this subject. The distinguished author, assuming that science and religion stand face to face in deadly conflict, proposes the following as preliminary to peace: "The mode of reconciliation suggested in

this book consists in the absolute and unconditional surrender of the province of religion to the methods of scientific investigation." He then draws a striking illustration from history. The advent of Modern Science he compares to the invasion of England by the conquering Normans, who, after their decisive victory at the battle of Hastings, were themselves absorbed into the common life of the subjugated race. He then continues in the following eloquent passage :

"The application of our parable is easy. The hour is coming when upon this field of intellectual controversy, the army of science will storm the last stronghold of religion regarded from the intellectual side. Reason will conquer herself the kingdom, which, even in the act of admitting the inevitable result it seems so hard to believe, can really belong to her. But 'Magna sunt facta et prevalebunt.' The methods, the dogmas, the assumptions, the opinions, the creeds of Christendom will pass under the yoke of scientific enquiry, and will continue to exist only so far as science permits and approves. And with the death of the old theology will begin the new religion, just as when the Norman soldiers sat down on English soil to eat their meal on the night of victory, began, then and there, that process which was to make them more English than the English themselves." The book is filled with similar sensible utterances.

The sentiments of this clergyman strike us as far in advance of Elder Shelton's, and we would, in the kindest manner, urge the latter to open his eyes and look about himself ; to brush away the mists that obstruct his vision, and endeavor to obtain a clearer view of the sun of science and truth. In another half century but few clergymen will be found who will insist

that the stories in Genesis are to be taken literally, but that they are simply a legend or fable, and of no practical value save to exhibit the literary taste and ability of olden times.

Speaking of the conflict between science and superstition, we like the way in which Dr. Draper thus states it: "As to the issue of the coming conflict, can any one doubt? Whatever is resting on fiction and fraud will be overthrown. Institutions that organize impostures and spread delusions must show what right they have to exist. Faith must render an account of herself to reason. Mysteries must give place to facts. Religion must relinquish that imperious, that domineering position which she has so long maintained against science. There must be absolute freedom for thought. The ecclesiastic must learn to keep himself within the domain he has chosen, and cease to tyrannize over the philosopher, who, conscious of his own strength and the purity of his motives, will bear such interference no longer."

We would willingly give Elder Shelton more of our views, but our remarks have already far transcended the limits we prescribed. We know not whether he will consider our arguments "solid," but if he will come again, we will be only too happy to enlighten him to the extent of our ability.

[From The Truth Seeker of June 1st, 1875.]

Another Blast from Elder Shelton.

This doughty defender of the old flood story has favored us with another of his luminous epistles. We hesitated some before cumbering our columns with such senseless twaddle, fearing our readers will not thank us for intellectual pabulum of so low a grade; but the Elder, doubtless, likes to be heard, and we will humor him this once more.

If regrets were availing, we would indulge in sorrow that this man of great faith should be so deficient in civility and common courtesy, and should employ expressions gentlemen never use. We do not care very much about his calling us "a dirty fellow;" his calling us so does not make us so; nor we cannot see with what propriety he gives us such an appellation. We bathe pretty often, and do not grovel in filth or dirt. Does the good Elder think we are "dirty" because we cannot come to the same absurd conclusions he does? We imagine he and his foul names are hardly worth minding. We remember, when a boy, of passing through a farm-yard, when an old gander pursued us, and hissed at us fearfully. We, of course, felt insulted, and wished to be revenged. We soon, however, regained our equanimity and remarked to ourselves, "don't mind him, he is only a goose." The same remark is appropriate in this case. Since our boyhood we have met more than one insolent goose, but we try not to be annoyed at their hissing.

Now listen to what our amiable and intellectual Elder has to say. We render him *verbatim et literatim et spellatim:*

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT CO., ALA., May 7th, 1875.

MR. D. M. BENNETT, *Sir:*—I received one of your so, called Truth seekers, or more properly, one of your, Falsehood Depositorys, in which you have in vain, tried to answer the flood question.

First you complain of my bad grammer, I will say to you that it is good enough for Infidels to read, and no Christian will complain against it. You have also accused us of 'lieing,' but the beauty of it is you have not shown that it is so. The fact of the thing is, Mr. Editor you are a kind of a dirty fellow anny how, and you are not the first dirty fellow I ever got hold of. I come in contact with one of your sort a few years back, and in our debate which lasted two days, he got so mad he swore by the seven Stars and every thing else he could think of. He showed his Ignorance and want of truth and veracity to the whole audience. But Sir, he did not go so far in folly, and madness, as you have gone, in trying to answer my truths which is founded on the Bible, Science, and Philosophy. I thought at the start; you would get mad, but did not think that you would betray your Ignorance so far as to Blaspheme against the Holy Gohst, in comparing poor old Beecher to the Holy Gohst, and accusing the God of Heaven of Whoredoms. Sir, by this you have brought upon yourself the Contempt of all Christians who read it, and even the Just Censure of all moderate Infidels that read your Paper. This shows at once the Viper blood, that is in you, and shows too, the deep seated malice, and hatred, you have against the Christian, and that you are not actuated by the love of Truth as you hypocritically contend. And my private opinion, is, Mr. Editor that you have been a Preacher in your young days among some of the Orthodox Christian denominations, and probably have been turned out for some unchristian act, and then turned around with a malicious heart, and try to wage a war of extermination against the poor Christians. If it is not so in your case, it has been so in many cases.

Second, we called on the Editor in our last Article to prove by indubitable witness, or evidences, that there has been upheavels in the Earth on the continent of America, since the flood. The Editors pitiful excuse is, that the man is dead that knew about it, 'yes' and the next time

you hear a puffing Infidel talking about those upheavels in the Earth, the Witnesses will be dead again. The fact is if the Editor would receive the Bible declaration, about the great deep being broken up he would understand how it is that the different Stratas of Sandstone and Lime, are mixed up together in a conglomerated mass in certain Localities, and if he could believed that it rained 40 days and nights as the Bible states he could have told how that ridge which H. Scott, lives on in Blount Co, was formed some 40 feet above a Strata of Soil, Timber &c he could see that the 40 days rain would make a flood sufficient to wash the dirt and gravel from á high ridge, close by and from this small ridge, above this soil and timber, but he has entirely failed to give us any thing, but his bare assertions and when called on to prove them stated that the witnesses are dead. The fact is the Editor is driven to his last shifts, and to the wall, so much so that he became extremely absent minded in trying to answer our last Article, and got entirely out of soap and Tallow too, and went to planting Cucumber Seeds, and turning bed bugs into frogs. I laughed; when I saw the poor old grey headed Editor engaged in turning bedbugs into frogs, but from what I see of the Truth Seeker he had as well go on with the Bedbug business, and if the Editor lacks a supply of the little Pesky Creatures, we will send him some from Alabama by Express clear of freight charges. The People of Alabama would not care if he would turn all their bedbugs into frogs. Thirdly, after the frog matter, he tries to gass us Considerably, he is silly enough to try to make us believe that the Rocky and other Large Mountains, have been upheaved or formed from the force of Gass beneath. Now a man that would resort to such pitiful Subterfuges, in order to get rid of Bible truths, the Devil ought to get him, and then he would get Gass enough, but it would be Sulphuric Gass. Now Sir, as little as you think of it I have read Volumes of illustrious scientific works from noble minded and generous hearted Philosophers and Scientists, but none of them will agree with you in your Gass Theory. There is none but a few poisoned hearted Infidel writers that Claim Such a Theory. I wish Sir you would give me one hundred Dollars for every acknowledged Scientific man

that will say that the Bible and Science is in Harmony with each other, and go hand in hand. I would be willing to give you a hundred Dollars for every one to The Contrary. The Bible itself is full of Science; for instance, David in one of his Psalms calls the world the round world and bids it to rejoice. Job says he maketh the weight for the wind Job was Scientific, and understood that the air had weight, and again he says, He Stretcheth out the North over the Empty place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing.

Solomon Says, all the Rivers run into the Sea; yet the Sea is not full; unto the place from whence the Rivers come, thither they return again. Then Sir there is a grander and more Sublime Science taught in the Bible, and that is the Science of mans Salvation. You told us a great tale about a traveller from Japan and China, how honest they were and how fine they were getting along in Infidelity; you will have to prove to me, that man was a truthful man, before I will have it. But in order to prove to you that he Lied, I will take you to some Large Seaport Town, and I will Show you a Jappan or Chinaman Water Craft, or trading vessel, I will bring it along side of an American or European Ship of trade, and draw the contrast and say here is Infidel or heathen, and here is Christian, here is Bible, here is Science, and the blessings of civil and religious Institutions, it would compare about as favorable as a small Bird Trap, set up by the side of a fine mansion. Then go with one to the interior of Africa where they eat Snails and Bugs and also among the tribes of Indians and then turn to the Bible and Christian lands, and see the difference. Sir all the elevation and refinement you have about you, you owe it all to the Bible. Sir we do not displace the God of the Universe as you say about us, for a Jewish God, but we worship the great Jehovah or Creator of the Universe, who rules and governs all things, he is the first great Cause of all things, we prove this from Revelation, but you have no Revelation to back your blind Ideas, and in your blindness supose an impossible thing, and that is that the Universe was always in existence. Sir I thought I had an opponent when I commenced correspondence with you, but unless you give me something better than Gass, Cu-

cumbers, Bedbugs, and Frogs, you had better turn the matter over to some of your brother Infidels. I have written this Article as short and condensed as the subject will allow. You Can answer it if you see proper, if you do, dont waste so much Ink and Paper in trying to answer it, but I suppose the Ink and Paper is your own property and the Columns of your paper had as well be filled with that as any thing Else. ELD. J. C. SHELTON.

REMARKS. We have heard of people who knew so little that they did not know when they were whipped, and we think Elder Shelton is one of them. After we pointed out explicitly a baker's dozen of his falsehoods, uttered in his last article, and proved them to be positively false, he now exultingly says, "the beauty of it is you have not shown it is so." He reminds us of the fellow who stole a sheep, and after he and his family had eaten the flesh, the pelt, or skin, was found at his house and identified. When arrested for sheep stealing he chuckled and said: "Aha! you found the pelt, but the beauty of it is you didn't find the mutton!"

The Elder informs us he met a man in debate a few years since. He fails to tell us what subject they debated but we are left to infer the other fellow came off second best, for the Elder made him swear by the seven stars and every thing he could think of. The Elder ought to have told us what the fellow got mad at. Possibly it was at the Elder's suavity and good-breeding. We fear the unfortunate man did not have our early experience with the goose. If this man was the equal of Elder Shelton what a pair of intellectual giants they must have been! We would willingly perform a "Sabbath day's journey" to see such brave knights measure their steel. Just think of it! For two whole days these mental gladiators astonished and electrified

their audience. Great as this unknown man must have been, to go through what he did, it is perhaps not strange that his mind gave way at last, and he swore by the seven stars. Possibly he thought the Elder was seven giants in one. We are pleased that while this opponent must have been great, the Elder thinks he did not equal us in some points.

We are more pleased with this compliment than with the following one, that he thinks we have at some time been a preacher in an orthodox church. We really can't take that as much of a compliment: and notice how he puts it. After calling us a "dirty fellow," after accusing us of blasphemy, hypocrisy, and falsehood, he comes to the conclusion that we were once a preacher. It seems, then, the Elder thinks these qualities go together. If it is so we deem him more correct in this than in most of his other positions.

We wish to disabuse the Elder's mind, as well as to vindicate our character. We may have had our faults; we may have erred on the right hand and on the left; we are poor, and have some poor relations, but thanks to our stars, or some other good influence, we have never yet got so low as to be a preacher. We have never taken money from simple-minded and mistaken people under the pretense of dispensing to them the bread of life, of interceding for them at the throne of Deity and pretending to know more about God and the Devil and the future world than they did. No, no, we have never been a preacher! We have been a son of toil. The little money we have been able to get possessed of has been honestly procured. We have been conscientiously opposed to taking something for nothing, and have meant to tell the truth; hence we could not have been an orthodox

preacher, and would not be one, were we to live a dozen lives. Neither have we ever been expelled from any church, society or association. The Elder will have to try again.

Equally at fault is the Elder when he sees us a "poor, grey-headed old man." We are not poor in flesh, having as much on our bones as we find convenient or useful. We do not know that we have a grey hair in our head, but if it was all grey, it would be no disgrace Neither are we quite as old as Mathuselah was said to be. While we are fully as old as we ever were, we have seen the time when we were as young as anybody. We mention these small points to show the Elder how easy it is for him to be mistaken. In fact, we think him mistaken in nearly every instance.

The Elder seems rather pleased with our mention of the bed-bug and frog, and just for his pleasure we are perfectly willing they should be incorporated into the flood story, so he can have the satisfaction of referring to them often, thinking about them, and believing in them. He suggests that we change all the bed-bugs into frogs. We beg to be excused. It is not in our line. We cheerfully refer him to his God and to Moses. They are said at one time to have been very extensively engaged in the frog making business; literally filling a large country with them, including the fields, houses, chambers, beds, ovens and kneading troughs. As the Elder is a man of prayer, and as he wishes the bed-bugs to be changed to frogs, if he will just ask his God to do the little job for him, possibly he may be gratified. Perhaps he would not like quite as many frogs as were produced on the occasion referred to, for it will be recollected old

Pharaoh became very much annoyed with them and importuned Moses to kill them off, and that caused a terrible stench in the whole land. We think upon the whole, it will be better for the Elder to try and make out with what frogs he has down in Alabama, and if he is overrun with bed-bugs, to wash his bedsteads with soap-suds, and apply a solution of *corrosive sublimate*, mixed with spirits turpentine or kerosene. We assure him it is effectual, if thoroughly applied.

The Elder asserts we are "driven to our last shift." He is greatly mistaken; he is not half so powerful as he imagines he is. In the first place, we do not wear *shifts*, and have not for several years. If he means *shirts*, he is still wrong, for we are happy in assuring him we have half a dozen clean ones ahead. It has not always been so with us, but just now happens to be. He says, also, we are "entirely out of soap and tallow." We don't know how he should be so well informed about our soap and tallow, unless he has been prying around our premises. So far as soap is concerned, he is mistaken; we have several pieces on hand, and never allow ourselves to get entirely out. Tallow we have very little use for, and keep no supply by us. By the elegant metaphors the Elder uses, we are led to infer that, in addition to preaching, he is engaged in the soap manufacture. If this is so, we think he ought to succeed in making large quantities if he can only procure the tallow, as he has *lie* enough to fill all emergencies.

The pious Elder seems a little horrified at our allusion to the third part of his deity, or the third member of the firm—the trinity—(and which it is, the world will never know), and says we have thereby brought

upon ourselves the contempt of all Christians. That may be so, and it may *not.* If it *is*, it is wholly immaterial, for their contempt is so much beneath ours that no harm at all is done. We did not say anything about the God of Heaven committing whoredoms. We briefly alluded to a circumstance imperfectly described by Matthew and Luke, the only authorities we have upon the extraordinary subject. The former merely says, Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost," without telling us who found it, what means were taken to determine the Holy Ghost to be the father, or without describing the process by which the business was accomplished. Joseph is said to have dreamed it, and as the whole story rests upon what somebody dreamed, it is hardly worth while for the world to attach much importance to it, or for the Elder to be very much shocked if we briefly allude to it.

Luke does not inform us how the remarkable operation was performed, nor does he even say it was performed at all, but says that an angel appeared to Mary and told her the Holy Ghost should *come upon her* and the power of the Highest should overshadow her, but he fails to tell us whether this wonderful event ever did occur, so all that the Christian world has to build their stupendous edifice upon, of their human deity being begotten by God or the Holy Ghost rests upon what a man said Joseph dreamed, and a vision another man said a Jewish maiden had. Weak authority indeed! When an unmarried girl gives birth to a child in these days, it cannot be explained upon any such theory. Nobody would think a dream or a vision a sufficient basis for such an event. And even if the girl should claim she had been overshadowed by

God, or that the Holy Ghost had "come upon her," nobody would believe her. They would sooner think some priest, with real body and organs like Parson Beecher or Elder Shelton had called upon her to administer comfort and consolation. The passage should probably have been translated holy *priest* instead of Holy Ghost.

We have no reason to suppose Mary ever claimed anything so absurd as the Holy Ghost cohabiting with her, but that a century or two later, when the story and the system were fixed up, some unknown person wrote the tale about Mary's vision, and it has been attributed to Luke, and his book at the Nicene Council came near being rejected as uncanonical, being retained by a single vote. If the vote of that one priest had been cast the other way, or he had been absent, the book called Luke would not have formed a part of the Bible; the world would have known very little about the *overshadowing* business, and we would not necessarily have shocked Elder Shelton or the Christian world by referring to it.

There is an indefiniteness about this overshadowing operation which is rather unsatisfactory to a person of an enquiring turn of mind, who wants to know what he believes and *why* he believes it. Physiologists and most well-informed persons understand that human beings, and animals too, are begotten through the agency of sexual organs, and they cannot conceive how the result can be produced in any other way. Is there any sense in supposing Jesus was begotten by a process entirely different from all other persons who have come into the world? If a natural father was needless in his case, why not a mother also? If the sexual organs were not employed, why would it not

have answered just as well for the Holy Ghost to have overshadowed a wash-tub or a meal-bag? There is, indeed, a mystery about this overshadowing matter, that believers and all others, inasmuch as their eternal happiness depends upon their believing it, are entitled to have better explained.

The Elder certainly has no occasion to be horrified at our brief allusion to it. The idea is not originally *Christian.* It was borrowed entirely from the Pagans. The belief that God had sexual intercourse with women prevailed in the world many centuries before Christianity was invented. The idea was common in many nations, and Mary was by no means the first virgin said to be made pregnant by Deity. *Christna* was said to be begotten by God, and born of the virgin Devanaguy a thousand years earlier than the story was revamped in reference to Mary and Jesus. Nearly in the same age of the world, Buddha was believed to have been divinely begotten of the virgin Mahamia. Alankee, the Gengkiskan's grandmother, was held to have been impregnated when a virgin by divine influence, by a ray from heaven. The Greek mythology is also full of the stories of Gods and females cohabiting together, thus producing demi-gods. Mercury was the son of Jupiter and Maia, (almost Mary); Apollo, the son of Jupiter and Latona; Hercules, the son of Jupiter and Alcmena; Bacchus, the son of Jupiter and Semele; Proserpine, the offspring of Jupiter and Ceres, and she was afterwards carried off by Pluto, and gave birth to Vulcan. Juno was the daughter of Saturn and Ops and became the wife of Jupiter; Pallas was the daughter of Jupiter and Metis, though the monstrous fable has it that as soon as he discovered Metis was pregnant, he ate her up, and in

consequence he conceived, and Pallas came forth ready armed from his brain. That she and all the rest of these offspring of gods came from somebody's brain, is very apparent. All these fables were believed in many centuries before Jesus or his Holy Ghost-father was thought of. It is needless to multiply these instances in heathen mythology of the gods cohabiting with females and producing offspring. The Titans, the Cyclops, the Heroes and the Giants were all descendants of the gods and women. It would be too tedious to mention them all, but the fact is fully assured and positive, that Christians have no patent for the sublime idea of a god holding sexual intercourse with a woman. They borrowed it, as we have seen, from the Pagans, as they did all others of their dogmas and creeds; and now such men as Elder Shelton are shocked if we allude to it, and they imagine we are sacrilegious and blasphemous to speak of such absurdities. They are not offended if we doubt the story of Christna, and Buddha, and Apollo, and Mercury, and Bacchus, and Æsculapius, and Hercules and all those other cases which are much older, more original and more reasonable than their story, but are immensely shocked if we doubt their inspired tale about Mary and the Holy Ghost. We cannot, however, see much difference in the sanctity of these different deities and fables, and we speak of one with the same freedom we do of the other, and we have no fear of being smitten or punished in consequence. If Elder Shelton thinks he can influence any of these gods to visit us in their dire wrath for our temerity, let him go ahead and do his worst. If this is "viper blood," let it be so. It is only the truth. Vipers and snakes, however, have much to do with his religious

belief and nothing with ours; so he probably has quite as much of the "viper blood" as we have.

The same veneration which the Christian feels towards his system, the Mahometan feels towards his, the Persian towards his, the Buddhist towards his, the Jew towards his and the Brahmin towards his. Even the deluded wretch who bows down to a crocodile, feels an amount of awe and veneration, and, like Elder Shelton, thinks a doubter or scoffer of his god ought to be smitten with vengeance most terrible. These devotees are all equally in the wrong—all deluded and mistaken, all equally superstitious; and we trust the light of science and truth will ere long shine in upon them and convince them of their darkness and error.

Apropos of the Holy Ghost, what does Elder Shelton know of him? We apprehend nothing. He does not even know how to spell his name correctly. He persists in spelling it G-o-h-s-t instead of G-h-o-s-t. If there is such a person as a Holy Ghost, and Elder Shelton should ever be fortunate enough to come into his presence, we fancy the Ghost will serve a writ of ejectment upon him for bad orthography, and tell him to go back and attend spelling matches until he can learn to spell ghost correctly.

The Elder, by the by, has a "bad spell" upon him with several words. He has made improvements upon Webster—at all events Webster and he disagree. We notice he uses one more "s" in spelling gas than Webster uses, but that is nothing. He probably has the right to two or three esses in gas if he wishes to use them, and to put a capital at one or both ends if he pleases. He also has a right to suppose there is such a gas as *sulphuric* gas, and he may have

found an account of it in some of the elaborate scientific volumes he boasts of having read; but ordinary scientists know nothing of such a gas. There is a sulphuric acid and a sulphurous acid, but they are different compounds. The first contains three equivalents of oxygen to one of sulphur, while the latter has but two of oxygen to one of sulphur. In the form of gas oxygen and sulphur do not combine in the proportions of three to one, but of two equivalents of oxygen to one of sulphur, and hence is sulphur*ous* gas, and not sulphur*ic* gas. In the nomenclature of chemistry the prefixes and suffixes have much to do in designating the exact constituency of the numerous compounds in existence. Of this Elder Shelton seems totally ignorant. Why should he not be?—there is nothing of it in the Bible. Let him remember the gas which he superstitiously supposes prevails in hell, and which he devoutly hopes we may some day have to breathe, is spelt with one "s"—not two nor three—and that a small "g" is usually thought to be big enough when writing it. We really hope before Elder Shelton is called upon to take that gas for a regular diet he will learn how to spell it and how to write it. So much for the Elder's "*Gass.*"

We are not a little amused to hear the Elder quoting the Bible-scientists. He tries to make us think David knew the world was round because in Psalms lxxxviii in speaking of the terrors of God, it says: "They came round me daily like water, they encompassed me about together." This passage has reference to troubles and afflictions, and not the slightest allusion to the shape and form of the earth; and there is not the least certainty that David ever wrote a word of it. There is no authority for asserting he

did. When King James' translators rendered this compilation of wild strains and extravagant invectives and cursings into English they labeled them the "Psalms of David," but, as we said, nobody knows that he wrote a word of them. Possibly he wrote some of them, where he wants his enemies cursed; but no Bible scholar thinks he wrote them all. In our opinion this "man after God's own heart" knew better how to be a brigand, and how to slaughter, rob and despoil neighboring nations, and how to obtain a poor man's wife with whom he had become enamored and wished for his own sensual gratification, by having her husband placed in the front of battle where he would be almost sure to be killed—we say he knew better how to do this, than to write psalms, or that the earth was a round ball. The Elder may be able to find much science in the Bible that we cannot. We can find nowhere in Psalms, or any part of the Bible, any mention of the earth or the world being round. The *ends* of the earth are often mentioned, the *foundation*, the *lower parts*, and the *uttermost parts* are frequently spoken of, but nothing is said about its rotundity. The reason is, the writers knew nothing about its being round, and the sources whence they drew their inspiration—if they had any—were equally ignorant. Abraham did not know the earth was round, Moses did not know it, David did not know it, Solomon did not know it, and Jesus did not know it. None of the apostles, none of the Christian Fathers, none of the martyrs, none of the saints, none of the early popes bishops, nor priests knew it. A ten years old child of this day knows more of this great truth than all those distinguished men combined.

Copernicus, in the sixteenth century, was the great

mind who first made the grand discovery that the earth is round and revolves upon its own axis, and for giving utterance to this scientific truth the Christian Church persecuted him and sought this life. He was driven from friends and home, and was compelled to seek safety in a foreign country. Even Martin Luther, the great Reformer, called Copernicus "an old fool" for asserting that the earth is round. The fact of the rotundity of the earth contradicted all the old Bible philosophy, and the Church did its best to suppress it.

After the death of Copernicus, his disciple, Galileo, again gave utterance to the truth that the earth is round, that it revolves every day upon its own axis, and makes a revolution once a year round the sun. The Church again refused to suffer such dangerous doctrines to be taught, and the noble martyr to science was seized by the Church officials — was thrown into that infernal Christian torture-house called the "Holy Inquisition," and here the brave man was subjected to cruel torture for enunciating one of the most palpable truths of the Universe; and to save his life, being feeble and old, he was compelled to deny his firm and honest convictions, and to admit the earth stood still. He lived but a short time after his release, but he died exulting in the truth that "the earth still moves."

Solomon is another of Elder Shelton's Bible-scientists, and credits him with discovering that the rivers all run into the sea. Did it take "the wisest man" that ever lived to find out that fact? And is that the reason why he was called the *wisest* man? It might be supposed Solomon's seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines would have kept him so busy

that he could hardly find time to study geography or prosecute science. We conjecture the *woman science* was the science he understood the best of any.

Job is another of the Elder's Bible-scientists, and he quotes him as speaking of the "weight of the wind," "stretching out the North," and "hanging the earth." These ideas are perhaps sublime enough, but are not correctly expressed as modern scientists state them. It is thought Job investigated the subject of boils pretty thoroughly, for between God and Satan, he had a very hard time of it. Had he written a scientific treatise on "boils" we think he would have been accepted as good authority. The book of Job contains much beautiful language and many grand ideas. We have often thought it the most sensible book in the Bible. It makes nowhere any allusion to any character or event mentioned in other parts of the Bible. There is no date given by which its chronology can be even guessed at, though it is doubtless older than any part of the Jewish scriptures. The person who wrote it evidently knew something of astronomy, and talked freely about the stars, Arcturus, the Pleiades, and Orion, whereas these names are used nowhere else in the Bible, nor did its writers have any knowledge of astronomy. The book of Job is probably a drama or poem from the Chaldean language, and was borrowed or adopted by the Jews. The best scholars, Hebrew and others, agree that it is not Hebrew in character, that it was not written by a Jew, hence its divine origin and inspiration fall to the ground, for even Elder Shelton will hardly claim that anybody in olden times could have been inspired except a Jew.

After the Elder enumerates the delectable sciences

of the great book, he says, "there is a grander and more sublime science taught in the Bible, and that is the science of man's salvation." This shows the Elder does not know what science is. Is what he refers to, science? Let us see how much science it contains. The theory is about in this wise: God made the world according to a plan he had cogitated upon for thousands of years; he also made a nice garden, and in it planted a tree which bore inviting fruit: he made man of the dust and placed him in the garden, but finding he was lonely, he put him to sleep and took out one of his ribs, out of which he fashioned a young, plump, blooming, fascinating female. The man and woman probably would have got along very well had it not been for the fruit just mentioned and a big snake that God had also made, and which afterwards became the big, roaring Devil, the adversary of God, who has since successfully opposed God in every instance and defeated him in every encounter. God told the man he must not eat that fruit, although he had placed it there before him; but while the man was away in some other part of the garden the snake came along and got into conversation with the woman and persuaded her to taste of the fruit. She found it pleasant and induced her "old man" to try some when he came back. This little affair made God very angry and he turned them out of the garden he had prepared for them, cursing them severely, and placed a watchman at the gate to keep them out.

The man and woman however went into the business of raising children, and in a short time the earth became well populated. It seems the people did not do so well as they ought, and God became very sorry that he had ever made the world, or such a race of

troublesome beings. He concluded the best thing he could do would be to drown them out, and begin anew; so, after talking the matter over with Noah, and telling him how to get up a boat that would preserve himself and family, and a pair each of all the animals, birds, and insects, he opened the windows of heaven and let the rain fall down at such a rapid rate that in forty days and nights the whole earth was covered to the tops of the highest mountains, or five and a half miles deep, and everything was drowned except the fishes and the Noah-family in the ark.

More than a year passed from the commencement of the rain before Noah and his family could disembark to begin again the business of life; and the whole thing seems to have been another failure; for the people after the flood were just as bad as before it, and nothing was gained by the great freshet. God next felt as though he wanted a small portion of the human race to attach himself to, and who should share his special favors, so he entered into a contract with one Abraham, the son of an idolator, that his children should be his peculiar people, and that they should have more of his care and attention than any other portion of the human race. He agreed to stick to them forever, and that they should become as numerous as the sands of the sea-shore; but he had a great amount of trouble with this chosen tribe of his, and often got vexed with them almost beyond his powers of endurance, and he frequently threatened to wipe them off the face of the earth. In fact he did several times, for trifling offenses slay twenty, and forty, and fifty, and seventy thousand at a time. He also sold them into slavery, and then emancipated them; then led them forty years through a desert wilderness to

the land of Canaan, where he caused them to wage most cruel and exterminating wars upon the nations who occupied the country, and after a while they got to fighting among themselves, and ten-twelfths of them wandered away and got lost, and have never been heard of since. The two-twelfths continued to make him great trouble, absolutely destroying his peace of mind. He finally permitted their best city to be taken, and the magnificent temple they had built, to worship and honor him in, to be utterly destroyed, and let them go several times into slavery to be treated like beasts of burden. He finally seems to have given them up as a bad lot, and for two thousand years they have had to shift for themselves, having no more of God's special care than other folks. Thus it seems, to use a common expression, God rather "went back" on his contract with his chosen people. They never became one thousandth part as numerous as the sands of the sea shore, nor nearly as numerous as many other nations, and finally he seemed to take no greater interest in them than in other people.

Though God met with these repeated failures and disappointments he resolved to carry out the grand plan he had for thousands of years meditated upon, and in a most sublime and god-like manner to rescue from eternal destruction the miserable race he had created. So he came down out of heaven, and was born of a little Jew girl who had never had any sexual intercourse with any person of the male gender, except one Ghost. After he was born and grew up, he worked at the carpenter trade till he was about thirty years of age, when he began to preach about the country, and had a dozen fishermen who followed

him about from place to place something less than two years, when his peculiar and chosen people—the people too, he had come specially to save—put him to death in the most ignominious manner. He did not, however, remain dead; after thirty-six hours he came to life again, and in forty days he ascended up into heaven where he stays now most of the time.

This beautiful doctrine did not spread very fast for two hundred years, and the believers had to live part of the time in caves and other hiding-places; but at last a great heathen emperor named Constantine who had murdered his wife, his brother-in-law, his nephew, his eldest son and his father-in-law, and who was refused absolution for his crimes by the pagan priests, but finding the Christian priests would grant it, and seeing he could use the new sect to his advantage he became a Christian, and though it never has had but about one-twentieth part as many followers as the older systems of religion in Asia, from that day it soon became the most fashionable and aristocratic religion in the southern part of Europe, and at the same time the most cruel and bloody in the whole world. Over fifty millions of unfortunate people have been put to death in its name, and millions of priests have been fed and pampered in idleness, simply to dole out dogmas to the ignorant, superstitious masses, assuring them that those who bow in submission to their dictation shall go to heaven and wear a crown, and a white robe, and bow eternally before a white throne singing a song which has no end; while those who do not thus bow in submission, or cannot believe the story, will be cast into outer darkness and roast for millions of years in the eternal flames of fire and brimstone, with nothing to breathe but "sulphuric

Gass." Is it not a pretty picture? If it is a true one, it is indeed a great pity that God ever experimented in making a world or human beings. Non-existence would have been infinitely better than such a fate. This is Elder Shelton's grand, beautiful "science of salvation." If it is a science, he, and such as he are welcome to the whole of it! We want no part in it. We much prefer the article of science taught by Galileo, Humboldt, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Draper. Their teachings possess so much more of truth and consistency, so much less of superstition, absurdity and falsehood that we altogether prefer them.

A very noticeable trait in Elder Shelton is his demand for living and reliable witnesses. We spoke of the upheavals that have occurred upon the earth, and he demands a living witness. Probably some of these upheavals took place tens of thousands of years ago and perhaps millions of years ago; yet he says, "I want a living witness." We gave as authority Prof. Draper of this city, a man now alive and who is second in scientific attainments and reliability to no man in this country, in proof that upheavals have recently taken place in Europe, that half of Norway was elevated two feet or more, and that parts of the Alps were raised three hundred feet; but as the Bible says nothing about it, Elder Shelton won't believe a word of it. The same when we told him of information we received from an intelligent, honorable gentleman, an officer of the navy and a son of a respected patron of ours. Yes, when we, a man of veracity and a Truth Seeker, narrated a correct account of the happy and peaceful condition of the people of Japan, and which is corroborated by many writers, he hoots at it and calls the gentleman "a liar." While he is so incredu-

lous about events and occurrences of modern times, which, too, are entirely authentic and probable, it is amusing to see how easy it is for him to accept without the slightest difficulty the most absurd tales that unknown persons said occurred 5000 or 6000 years ago, and of an impossible character, written nobody knows when, nobody knows where, and nobody knows by whom; but because they are bound up in a book and called *the Bible*, and priests affirm it is the "word of God," he can swallow every word of it without a grimace, and look up for more. How would his Bible fare if living witnesses, or known witnesses, even, were required to sustain it? It would certainly go down! But Elder Shelton and all like him are so full of faith, and are so ready to accept every absurd tale marked "Divine," that they care not who the writer was, or whether the story is impossible or absurd. So it purports to be Jewish or Christian, "it is all right"—"it is the word of God."

The Elder talks about producing scientists who sustain the Bible story, and wants us to pay one hundred dollars a piece for them. We happen not to have a very large amount of money to spare, but we hesitate not to guarantee him $100 each for every first-class scientist that will say he believes the Universe was made in six days from nothing, less than 6000 years ago; that the earth is older than the sun, and brought forth trees, and plants, and vegetables, perfecting seeds and fruits before the sun existed to impart light and heat; that it ever rained to the depth of 30,000 feet in forty days over the entire earth, or seven hundred and fifty feet per day, over thirty-one feet an hour, or six inches a minute for six weeks, without intermission; that such a vast body of water could evaporate

and be held up by the atmosphere, or otherwise disposed of; that a man could cause the sun and moon to stand still merely by speaking to them; that there ever was a time when neither rain nor dew fell upon the earth for three and a half years; that three men should be thrown into a fiery furnace, made seven times hotter than usual, without their being burned at all, or a thread of their garments scorched. We say, that for every eminent scientist that will affirm he believes all these absurdities, and scores more of similar ones with which the Bible is filled, we will hold ourselves in readiness to pay the Elder his price, and feel that the money has been well invested. But remember they must be *Scientists*, not Elders, Sunday-school teachers, bigots nor fools. We do not believe a single sound scientist can be found who, for a moment believes any such nonsense; and the men of ordinary common sense are getting very scarce who longer accept such idle tales. Sensible clergymen, even, are fast disavowing such silly stories and are trying to modify these statements, or make the language mean something else. The Rev. O. A. Burgess, Professor in the Theological Seminary of Indianapolis, a man who, in natural or acquired ability, would, in any community, rank several degrees higher than Elder Shelton, in a recent debate with B. F. Underwood admitted that Noah's flood was only local in character, and probably did not extend beyond Asia Minor. But Elder Shelton will have it that it extended to the opposite side of the globe, even to Alabama, and covered the ridge on which Mr. H. Scott lives, in Blount county — poplar trees, and all — with gravel forty feet deep. We presume it requires an ignoramus like the Elder, to believe such an event possible; and

it is probably useless to make much effort to get good, hard sense into the heads of such. They have so much *faith* there is not much room for *sense* and *reason.*

As the Elder calls for a living witness to convince him of the truth of upheavals on this continent, we will, before dropping him, humor him in this respect. The witness is one who stands as high as any living man, one who is extensively known over the entire civilized world, and though his philosophy may not in all cases be accepted, his facts always are. The name of this distinguished witness is Charles Darwin A.M.,F.R.S., of London. In 1831 and '32 the British Government sent out the ship Beagle to South America on a voyage for scientific purposes. Prof. Darwin was commissioned to accompany the expedition to make observations in Natural History, Geology, etc. While in South America he had excellent opportuities to witness the effects of earthquakes and volcanoes, as well as upheavals which in various places occurred. In describing a severe earthquake which took place in South America, Feb. 20th, 1832, while he was in the country, and which comprised in all, some three hundred separate shocks of greater or lesser magnitude, the effects of which extended over one thousand miles, he mentions the towns that were destroyed ; numberless buildings that were utterly demolished; the frightful fissures that were made in the earth, and goes on to say : "The most remarkable effect of this earthquake was the permanent elevation of the land. There can be no doubt that the land around the Bay of Concepcion was upraised two or three feet, at the Island of St. Maria (about thirty miles distant) the elevation was still greater : on one

part Capt. Fitz Roy found beds of putrid muscle shells still adhering to the rocks ten feet above high water mark: the inhabitants had formerly dived at low water spring tides for these shells." [This proves the upheaval must have been twenty or thirty feet.] "The elevation in this province is particularly interesting from its having been the theatre of several other violent earthquakes; and from the vast number of sea-shells scattered over the land up to the hight of 600, and I believe, 1000 feet. At Valparaiso similar shells are found at the hight of 1300 feet. It is hardly possible to doubt that this elevation has been effected by successive small uprisings such as that which accompanied or caused the earthquakes of this year; and likewise by an insensibly slow rise which is certainly in progress in some parts of this coast."

After narrating the powerful effects of the earthquake seven hundred and fifty miles in one direction and our hundred miles in an other, he takes occasion to say, "we may confidently come to the conclusion that the forces which slowly and by little starts uplift continents, and those which at successive periods pour forth volcanic matter from open orifices are identical. From many reasons I believe the frequent quakings of the earth, on this line of coast, are caused by the rending of the strata necessarily consequent on the tension of the land when upraised and then injection by fluidified rock. This rending and injection would, if repeated often enough (and we know earthquakes repeatedly effect the same areas in the same manner, form a chain of hills; and the linear island of St. Mary, which was upraised thrice the height of the surrounding country seems to be undergoing this process. I believe the solid axis of a mountain differs in

its manner from a volcanic hill only in the molten stone having been repeatedly injected instead of having been repeatedly ejected." In this way he believed the vast mountain ranges were gradually thrown up from time to time as these exterior earthquakes occur, and he also believed the surface of the earth was as variable from the accretions and explosions of internal gasses, as the surface of the water, in a comparative degree.

In speaking of his observations on the northern coast of Chili, he uses this language: "I have convincing proofs that this part of the continent has been elevated near the coast four hundred to five hundred, and in some parts from one thousand to thirteen hundred feet since the epoch of existing shells; and further inland the rise has probably been greater." "At Lima a sea-beach has certainly been upheaved eighty to ninety feet within the Indio-human period."

Mr. Darwin narrates finding sea shells and other washings of the ocean in many places hundreds of feet above the surface of the water, showing at some time or times great upheavals have taken place. He also speaks of a pyramidial island in the ocean, around whose borders soundings are seventeen hundred feet, showing at some time it was thrown up by the internal forces. He also gives an account of a new island coming to the surface by the effects of an earthquake. He also believed in England, France, Switzerland, and many other countries, the same condition of internal commotion had at some age of the world taken place, by which the mountain ranges had been produced, and that quietness had succeeded the spending of their internal forces. But we cannot quote him

further now. These interesting statements may be found in his *Journal of Researches in Natural History and Geology, during the voyage of H. M. S. Beagle;* two volumes ; published by Harper & Brothers.

Prof. Darwin is one of the men Elder Shelton thinks a poison-hearted Infidel, and one who resorts to "pitiful subterfuges" in order to get rid of Bible truths, and one whom the Devil ought to get, and immerse in the flames of hell forever, for presuming to bring any facts to light that clash with the Bible story. Let the Elder enjoy this beautiful thought if it affords him pleasure. In the meantime the sensible portion of the world regard Charles Darwin as one of the greatest minds, and one of the most reliable authorities our time has produced. By him we have proved the positive occurrence of upheavals on this continent, and we hardly think Elder Shelton, by his ignorant sneers and idiotic slurs, can gainsay the facts Darwin establishes.

We are not sure such ponderous minds as Elder Shelton's can accept testimony so obscure as Prof. Darwin's, and he, doubtless, will still insist that there have been no upheavals on this continent because the Bible says nothing about it, and will still claim that all the mountain ranges were caused by Noah's flood, when the "foundations of the great deep were broken up"; and that no changes have taken place in the earth except what are mentioned in the Bible. Is it not a little curious that the flood which was sent to cover the tops of the highest mountains should at the same time have brought these very mountains into existence? This is a specimen of Elder Shelton's logic. What a great mind!

We will not object, however, should the Elder

still believe in the flood and all the other monstrous Bible stories, if he finds they suit his grade of intellect. We are convinced, nevertheless, that people of good sense are ceasing to believe them, and fast turning their attention to scientific authors, and informing themselves on subjects of which the ignorant writers of the Bible had not the slightest conception.

We will be content to let the Elder continue to imagine in his simple heart that the world is indebted to the Bible for the advances that have been made in knowledge, education, civilization, law, and the arts and science, though there is not a word of truth in it. It has given the world none of these; but has been the source of incomparable error, mental blindness, superstition, carnage and bloodshed—which can be easily shown. But if the great Alabamian derives pleasure from the follies and absurdities he fondly clasps to his bosom, it is not in our heart to tear them from him, and thus render him unhappy. Let him be "joined to his idols," let him still dream on about miracles and floods, and ghosts and gods, and devils and bibles and revelations, until he has lived out his days and gives place to those who will exercise their thought, their reason and their common sense.

We can follow Elder Shelton no longer; we have, we fear, already given him more attention than his mental calibre and his low estimate of good-breeding would seem to justify.

A REPLY TO

Elder Shelton's Fourth Letter.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[From The Truth Seeker of July 15th, 1875.]

This valorous defender of ancient superstitions and absurdities evidently does not belong to those governed by the rule "three times and out." We have already published three of his frothy, feeble letters and supposed we had done with him, but here he comes again with another of his vapid productions, which he wants us to print, and as he promises, upon his "sacred honor," this is his last, we will, notwithstanding the decision we had formed to the contrary, let him be heard still once more. He will understand, however, this *must* be the last. We have his measure; we know what there is in him, and it is of a quality that will not bear repetition.

BROOKSVILLE, BLOUNT CO., ALA., June 8th, 1875

MR. D. M. BENNETT—*Sir:* Being warned, in your very kind and generous communications to me, published in your so called TRUTH SEEKER, that you can follow me no longer, and hinted Slightly at my Ignorance and great lack of being a gentleman in all things. But stated that you were going to publish a small pamphlet containing the discussion between this (ignoramos) and yourself. If you are so well informed and I am so ignorant; I am sure the pamphlet will not bring any credit or proffit to either of us. But for fear you do take a curious notion and print such a pamphlet, I send this as a closing Article of recapitulation. There is one thing that I acknowledge, you can beat me at; it is a low vulgar kind of *Ridicule* against all things that are holy, and righteous, written in the word of God, with a vulgar pregudice actuated by a diabolical heart, and a diseased conscience. You seem to think it very strange that I should believe in the Scriptural account of the flood, though I have indubitable evidences of such a flood and evidence that you have tried to ridicule but have not nor never will overthrow by false argument, which is so thin that a twelve year old boy could not fail to detect it. And right on the end of this; insult my senses by quoting B. F. Underwood on Evolution, 10th page TRUTH SEEKER, June 1st. In a Lecture by that gentleman he states that our Solar system was once a fire mist, and also that life appeared in the same way Now, I do think that, that Theory is a long way more mistical or more properly (misty) than the flood possibly could be, so much so that none but Philosophical *Maniacks* could possibly believe it. And Mr. Editor you and B. F. Underwood may both go and seek your Ancesters among the Ape and monkey tribes, in your false Theories. I assure you they are no connexion of mine.

I try to worship a God that has made man and has given him Soul and Spirit life, which elevates him far above the scale of Animal beings. Not a drop of animal or monkey blood tracks its course through my veins. I claim that God made me a human being, and you and professor Underwood can have as much animal about you as you want. But I will stop right here and ask you and the Professor what created this fire mist. which has created

the Universe. I recon both of you can give me about as good answer to this, as the negro did when asked, what he believed the Earth stood on, he said it stood on a large Durham Bull, when asked what the Bull stood on, said that it stood on a large Turtle, and when asked what the Turtle stood on, said he did not know unless it floated about on the sea of nothing. Hence such systems generally taper down to a fire mist or otherwise vapor and smoke. Such men are determined not to have the Soul humbling doctrine of the Gospel, and the flood, though an Angel declare it unto them, and though a righteous Moses should by Inspiration, tell them how the Earth was made, and how the flood came, yet my Editor is compelled to believe Mr. Underwood's fire mist Theory of the Universe because he sees, or imagines he sees, a great deal of nice Philosophy in it. Oh! consistency thou art a Jewel. Now, Sir in conclusion I will honestly say to you that I would not have my wife to believe as you do for nothing in the world; you may ask me why. It is because the fear of the God of the Universe would not be implanted in her heart, the fear of hell and the reward of heaven would not be in her mind. Creating a good conscience within, which never mislead any one, I would be afraid of such a wife, from the fact that she might get the free love fever, in her head, and would be free to love some body besides the old man of the house, and if there is no God, no Heaven, no Hell, she might undertake to make the best of surrounding circumstances, and poke a spider in the old man's dumpling; knowing that there would be no Hell, nor a Just God to punish such conduct, then she could go and exercise her free love with her free lover, under her grand system of Infidel belief which things go hand in hand and beautifully harmonizes in this present world. And there is another thing, I will never suffer an Infidel or Materialist to swear in Court against me, nor neither will I vote for one to fill any office. You see at once that I firmly believe that it is the Bible and the words of Christ, that has made us such a great civil and religious Government, and have made so many millions of noble hearted, and pious men and women. Look at China, look at Africa, and all the heathen countries that have not the Bible, and see how degraded they are. The

man that would tear away every thing that makes a people noble, and happy, certainly is a monster. I now close on my part, the argument on the flood question, if my theory is correct, I will meet you at the Judgement, and then we will know how it is, but if you are right there will be no Judgement, and it will not matter whether any thing was ever right or no. Please publish this as my closing remarks; you can close on your part as you see proper, and do not stop to quibble about our bad spelling or grammar. I want you to meet the argument if you can. If you publish in Pamphlet form, send me two or three copies and I will send you an equivalent for them. ELDER J. C. SHELTON.

REPLY.—Much that the Elder says is unworthy a reply, containing, as it does, neither sense nor argument. His talk about our "vulgar prejudice," our "diabolical heart" and "diseased conscience" is a kind of Christian twaddle not worth noticing.

He is quite welcome to the "indubitable proof" he boasts of having of Noah's flood. He is, perhaps, entitled to boast a little, for he is the only person in the world that has any such proof. If, however, that poplar log in Mr. Scott's ridge in Blount Co., Alabama, which he mentioned in his first letter, is his *indubitable proof*, he can have the enjoyment of it all alone to himself, for nobody else will regard it as having the most distant connection with Noah's flood any more than it had with the whale's swallowing Jonah.

The Elder seems offended at us; he says, "And right on the end of this, insult my senses by quoting B. F. Underwood on Evolution, on tenth page of TRUTH SEEKER, June 1st." Now it seems to us if Elder Shelton had the intelligence of a three year old Esquimaux boy, he would not have fallen into the mistake that we were quoting B. F. Underwood on him, and he would have been saved this dire insult he com-

plains of. In that number of our paper we gave a synopsis of a lecture of Mr. Underwood on Evolution, but it had no more reference to Elder Shelton or his belief than to a blind Hottentot and his fetish idol. Possibly, the simple Elder thought all THE TRUTH SEEKER contained was addressed to him personally. If so, he is mistaken; true, we gave up considerable space to him, but not the entire paper.

Smarting under this imagined insult, that the fire-mist theory should be quoted on him, with a zeal worthy of Sancho Panza, he at once draws his spear and charges upon the dangerous foe—the windmill of Evolution. In the simplicity of his heart, he supposes the *fire-mist* theory is a new idea of Mr. Underwood's. Probably he never heard of it before, and is wholly unaware it has been taught more than fifty years by La Place, Herschel and other distinguished philosophers and astronomers who found evidence in the Universe that not only the solar system, but other suns and worlds have evolved from a nebular state or fire-mist. Indications are found with the aid of immense telescopes, that worlds in their very infancy, are now emerging from this condition and are gradually condensing and evolving into solid spheres. But the pious Elder, deeming this a new heresy of Mr. Underwood's, rushes upon it in his most valorous style. Having never read anything of fire-mists in the Bible; finding nothing of it in the song of Moses and the Lamb, he essays to demolish it at once. Stay, Elder Shelton, sheath thy sword, thou art hardly the man to overthrow the theories and deductions of the great astronomers named.

To the Elder's question, who made the fire-mist? we have to reply, it was not *made*. It was a form of

matter of which the Universe is composed, and al ways existed, the same as he would say his God has It is so easy for him to believe his God always existed, why cannot he strain his imagination a little and think something else might also have always existed? Can he imagine how God could exist for countless ages with nothing else in existence besides? Where did he stay, and what was he doing for myriads of ages? Is it really any more difficult to understand that matter, in some form, should ever have existed than that God is capable of making the boundless Universe of nothing, and that he existed alone with nothing besides him for numberless trillions of years before he commenced the enterprise of making a Universe?

The Elder is positive that not a drop of monkey blood courses through his veins; but we are not so sure of it. Were he to compare a little of his blood with the blood of an ape or monkey, he would not find much difference.

The Elder is so well pleased with his story about the negro, the Durham bull, and the large turtle, we will leave him in the enjoyment of it. There is nothing in the story, and besides he has changed it from what it used to be, but it appears just fitted to his calibre, and we are content.

The Elder's most powerful argument in this fourth letter is where he says he would not have his wife believe as we do "for nothing in the world," for fear she would get the free-love fever in her head and leave him and the house and children to go after some other man, first putting spiders in his dumplings and poisoning him off and getting him out of the way.

We believe that is the last argument against infidelity he have yet heard.

We are truly sorry the simple Elder thinks no more of his wife than that it requires a belief in a Devil and a hell to keep her from feeding him upon spiders and running off over the country with some gayer Lothario than himself. Now we think much better of Mrs. Shelton than her husband does. We do not believe she would do any such thing, even if she should cease to have faith in a Devil. It would be a monster that would mix spiders in dumplings and pies to feed her husband and children, and we do not believe Mrs. Shelton is that kind of a woman. She may not have exercised good judgment in selecting a husband, but we have no idea she wants to kill him.

How little, indeed, Elder Shelton seems to know about Liberals and unbelievers, and how bad his own heart must be, to suppose, because a person has not his crude belief to govern them, they would wish to kill somebody and commit other heinous crimes. If the Elder is really such a man that it requires his religious faith to keep him from committing inhuman offences, we pity him, and are compelled to give some credit to his belief, as abhorent as it otherwise is. The Elder we repeat knows very little about unbelievers or Infidels. Probably he has never met many. He lives in a part of the country where Freethinkers do not greatly abound, and where it is customary for every negro, however ignorant, and every white man, however unlearned, without the first doubt or enquiry to believe in a Devil, a hell and a cruel God who begat a son with a young Jewish maiden, and though he was much pleased with his son, he caused him to be put to death in a most cruel manner, on account of the great

animosity he held towards the human family. Nearly every negro in Alabama believes this beautiful creed, and so does Elder Shelton.

As the Elder knows so little about the character of those who differ from him in belief, we will condescend to enlighten him if he is able to receive it. We will be glad if he can believe the truth. We have met many unbelievers in the Christian dogmas and for years have been well acquainted with considerable numbers of them, and we have invariably found them good, well-disposed people, who neither wished to murder nor violate the laws of the land. We have found them quite as moral and upright, as honorable and honest as the best Christians we ever met. Infidel women are as virtuous, stay at home as well and are as true to their husbands as any class of wives in the country. We and our wife have jogged along together thirty years; her belief corresponds closely with our own, and we can bear cheerful evidence that she has been a faithful, good wife. We have not the slightest idea that she ever put a single spider in our food, in fact we have noticed she has been very careful a fly even did not get in; nor have we ever had occasion for the faintest suspicion that she was running off on free-loving expeditions with other men. No, no, Elder Shelton, Infidel women do not act that way; they are governed by honest convictions and upright principles, and not by fear of the Devil. You have made a sad mistake, good Elder; it is *Christian* women that most practice free-love; it is in Christian Churches to-day that free-love most largely abounds. There is scarcely a Church in the country that has not more or less of it. There is scarcely a priest, pastor or elder but what is guilty of loving the sisters too

well. There are, unfortunately, hundreds and thousands of sisters ready and willing to yield themselves a free offering to please these good men of God, whom they so highly revere. We can scarcely pick up a paper but what we find accounts of some new case of some preacher having criminal connection with some of the sisters of his flock, and not one case in a score is ever allowed to come to the light. There is vastly more of this kind of business going on in the churches than outsiders dream of. Talk, indeed, about Infidels being free lovers! Christian preachers and elders have no occasion to look outside the churches for that article. And why should not the dear sisters be all to them the name of wife implies? It is scarcely wrong to please a man of God, and if it is, if it is even sin, if they only have *faith*, the blessed Savior wipes it all away—he pays the debt, if any is contracted. Though their sins be as red as scarlet, he makes them as white as wool. Even Elder Shelton himself, if we had a full account of his "true inwardness" would not, we fear, show an entirely clear record. It is quite likely that a man of so much faith has abounded in works also, if not, he is an exception to the general rule.

Among all the Infidels we have known, we never knew a woman that fed her husband on a diet of spiders; nor have we known a man who died of eating spiders. That is entirely a figment of Elder Shelton's brain. We beg him to divest himself of it and to try and have a little more confidence in his injured wife. She is probably a better woman than he would be in her place.

The pious Elder shows his illiberality by saying, "I will never suffer an Infidel or a Materialist to swear in

Court against me, nor will I vote for one to fill any office." He doubtless feels just as he says. He would deprive every Infidel of giving evidence in courts of justice, and of holding offices of honor and trust. What a bad heart he must have, and how fortunate it is for we poor unbelievers that all Christians do not feel just as he does, and that his sort are not more numerous than they are. Why, if Elder Shelton could have his way, we would not be allowed to breathe; for, by the same rule that he would deprive us of the right to testify and hold office, he would deprive us of the right to think for ourselves, to speak and to breathe. That is precisely the spirit that actuated Christians in the past centuries in putting to death hundreds of thousands, yes, millions of unfortunate heretics that did not think and believe as the Christians said they must. These cruel murderers were simply Elder Shelton's, who were satisfied they were right and were determined every body should arrive at the same conclusions they did. How unjust and untrue the decision that a man cannot tell the truth and is not to be allowed to give his evidence in courts who does not believe the Christian dogmas; as though any special form of belief makes a man truthful.

If any difference is to be made between a Christian and an Infidel, the latter should have the preference. Christians, usually, are a class who subscribe to a set of dogmas or articles of belief without much scrutiny, doubt or investigation. They take for granted everything their preacher or elder tells them is true, and like an unfledged robin they swallow it without hesitation, especially so, since it is the popular creed and more *respectable* than to be a heretic. With an

Infidel it is quite different; he doubts much that to him appears mythical and improbable; much that strikes him as unreasonable and absurd; he brings his reason to bear and tests the creeds presented to him by this excellent guide; he requires proof before he can give his assent to any code of dogmas and whether he is popular or unpopular he does not pretend to believe that which to his reason is unfounded and absurd. He does not seek popularity, nor join a Church to get into good society or to gain the approbation of Mrs. Grundy or Mrs. Upper-Crust. He is emphatically an independent and an honest man. He reveres truth and uprightness for their own sake, not because he is told of an cloven-footed Devil with pitchfork, who is after him to pitch him into a fiery lake of burning brimstone. As a rule, he is a man of veracity and his simple word is quite as good in a court of justice or any where else, as the oath of Elder Shelton or any Christian in the land. When a man is willing to stem the popular current of thought, and estimates truth and reason higher than he does popularity; when he is willing to class himself with those despised and traduced for opinion's sake; when he hesitates not to incur obloquy and hatred that he may give utterance to his honest convictions, depend upon it, he is a reliable, honest man, and his word may be taken in every place and condition. This is not true of the sycophantic, the priestly dupe who believes, or pretends to believe whatever the dignataries of the Church tell him he must believe, and that by so doing he will not only lay up treasures in heaven, but be ranked with the most respected and fashionable classes in this world.

The Elder spurns the idea of voting for an Infidel

for office, but many better men have thought differ ently from him. Among the Presidents this country has had, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Abraham Lincoln may be classed as Infidels. They were unbelievers in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and several of them were decided in their infidelity. Were they not honorable, worthy men ? Was not their word and oath good enough to be taken in a court of justice, and was it not an honor for honest, upright men to vote for them ?

In the claim Elder Shelton sets up, that the Bible and the words of Christ have done so much towards civilizing the world, he exclaims, "Look at China, look at Africa!" Well, what of them ? China, it is true, is an Infidel nation, but barring the evils of over-population, she is doing very well. The Chinese are probably not equal in all respects to the Anglo-Saxon race, but they are peaceful, intelligent, industrious and law-abiding. There is not half the crime among them, no scarcely ten per cent. the crime there that exists in the same amount of population in Christian nations—400,000,000. Their religion is as good as the Christian religion, and the morals which Confucius handed down to them are equally as pure as those taught later by Jesus ; and they have not taken one life in war and bloodshed where Christians have taken thousands. So much for China.

Africa, of course, is a country of gross ignorance, and the people suffer greatly from a lack of enterprise and general intelligence, but they are full of superstition and religion. In fact ignorance and religion seem to go hand in hand. Where one exists, there will you always find the other. The grosser the igno-

rance, the greater the mental darkness that submerges a people, the more they abound in superstition, baseless myths and absurd beliefs. Africa is a country which shows what an excess of religion, founded on mythical superstition, will do for a people. The only hope for her is in the diffusion of intelligence, education, enterprise and consequently *infidelity*, by other more advanced nations. In short, this is the great need of the world—more knowledge, more science, more reason and common sense ; less belief in myths and miracles, less superstition, less faith in a supernatural religion, less priestcraft and less yielding up to priests the intelligence and reason the God of the Universe imparted to man, to guide and govern him. The world needs more a rule of reason, more infidelity and less supernaturalism and mysticism.

We have cheering hopes for the future of our race. In the next two centuries we expect much greater gains will be made in the domain of reason, science and truth than in the last thousand years. The power of priestcraft will be terribly shaken, if not wholly overthrown; revealed religion will be at a great discount and certain knowledge will supplant mysticism and superstitious vagaries. Christianity is not to be the religion of the future. It is one of the religions of the past ; it has not come up to the necessities of the race, and is destined to pass away. The religion of the future will be the *Religion of Humanity*, and will embrace all that benefits mankind morally, physically and intellectually. How to teach the race what is needful for them, how to beget healthy, well-developed children, how to live healthfully and in accordance with physiological laws, how to lessen disease, how to increase longevity, how to select and perfect the

wisest and best social conditions, how to live usefully, amicably and happily, how to control the baser passions, how to acquire the most intelligence, how to gain the most scientific information, will be the labor of coming generations. Pagodas, mosques, synagogues, cathedrals, churches and chapels will not be erected as much as now, but more schools of science and more institutions of learning, freed from sectarianism. The world will need fewer oracles, dervishes, priests, monks, pastors and elders, but more teachers of science and the manifold laws of the Universe. The attention of the race will be devoted to making this life and this world as useful and as happy as possible, rather than in frantic efforts to evade the imaginary punishments of a future existence. Men will then learn to know and comprehend God as he is—the inherent power and force which governs the Universe; and the monstrosities which men in dark ages have devised will pass away, and no longer frighten children or grown people. When this rule is inaugurated, the true millennium will have arrived —the rule of reason and of love of the human race.

We must now take our final leave of Elder Shelton; we have our part to perform in the direction just indicated, and cannot spend too much time with him. He may naturally be a good sort of person, but he has so much superstition, so much blind faith, and so much ignorance that they nearly ruin him. If he had more intelligence and less religion, he doubtless would do very well. We would gladly have him embrace the truth as it is in nature and reason, if he had the honesty and capacity to comprehend it, but we are not very hopeful of him. We fear he is too far

gone to be cured; but while the lamp holds out to burn, the simplest dupe may return.

The Elder is certainly entitled to some credit; he is not unwilling to discuss the *pro and con* of what he believes, however absurd it may be. It is seldom we find a Christian preacher willing to fairly discuss with a Freethinker. They either lack confidence in their own arguments or have too much fear of the Infidel's logic. The Elder having full confidence in his own abilities and equally as much in his creed steps boldly forward. How much he has aided his side we will not undertake to say. We wish his cause was worthy of his zeal.

The Elder dropped a word about our vulgar kind of ridicule, etc. He wrongs us. We have not been vulgar; but had he assumed more the conduct of a gentleman, and shown more of good manners, we should have treated him more respectfully. If he thinks we have said aught amiss in this direction, he has himself only to blame. Dear Elder Shelton, good bye.

Discussion with George Snode.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the many friendly and appreciative letters we receive from all parts of the country, we occasionally get one of an opposite character, and as we are rather fond of publishing those of the first-class, it is, perhaps, only just to give one of the latter. The following is one of these, and not to do our ex-patron injustice we will give his letter *verbatim et literatim:*

Beloit, O., Jan. 16th, 1875.

Mr. Bennett Dear Sir: Please Stop Your Truth Seeker. I do not See what good you Expect to Derive from Publishing such Nonsense and foolishness as is Printed in What you call the T. S. It most certainly mistakes its name and clings to Things and Doctrines That you and your Coajutors in spreading such pernicious Doctrine Poisoning the minds of the rising Generation, Desecrating everything that tends to Enoble man and tends to make home enjoyable. You Disrobe man of all; you Draw the Centre Bolt that Keeps Nations Governments and Hearthstones together: Send men and nations on the Ocean of Distrust and Unbelief like a clock without its Weights; all Confusion and Disorder.

Yours in the Hope of reform,

George Snode.

REPLY.—We are, of course, sorry to lose a single patron, but more sorry that reading THE TRUTH SEEKER a year and a half, has done Mr. Snode no more good. He seems to be as much in the dark as though he had never seen a Liberal paper. He appears to regard Freethought and Free Speech with great disfavor. We, of course, regret that we fail to meet his approbation in the course we are honestly pursuing; but we cannot see that he has anything better to offer us, than the errors and absurdities which the hireling priests have been dealing out to the world for hundreds of years. Their fables and fallacies will not satisfy the enquiring, scientific minds of to-day. The thoughtful are reaching for a higher phase of truth than the superstitions of the past. We think we shall be content to pursue the highest truth we can find, in company with such men as Humboldt, Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, Mill, Crookes, Varley, Wallace, Draper, and other scientific men of that class, rather than to pick up the dry husks of error that old theology has to present, though we have to part company with Mr. George Snode.

We are also sorry that our friend in ordering THE TRUTH SEEKER stopped, did not deem it a matter of right and justice to pay for the time he has been served with it. He paid last year for Vol. I, but for the ten numbers of Vol. II which have been sent him, not a cent has he paid. Among publishers and readers, it is usually considered honorable for a man, when he stops his paper, to pay up for the time he has taken it. The law also declares a man bound to pay for a paper so long as he takes it from the post-office, whether he ordered it or not. It is a very small matter to notify a publisher to discontinue his paper, or

request his postmaster to do so, and to remit the amount in arrears. We hope none of our readers wish us to furnish the paper for nothing. Had Mr. Snode paid the seventy-five cents due us, we should think more of his religion, more of his honor, and part with him in friendship. We hope, too, he will some day obtain a better view of that which is true, and be less swayed by prejudice and early education.

Rejoinder from Snode.

BELOIT, OHIO, Feb. 8th, 1875.

MR. BENNENT, *Dear Sir:* THE TRUTH SEEKER of February 1st Contains a article to stop your Paper, written over my signature; you called it *uncomplimentary* (Thanks for the concession) I should have been sorry indeed, if you had construed it in any other way; Was sorry that I forgot the sum due on your paper, as I do not want you to estimate my Religion and honor as low as you do your friendship, which can be bought, sold and bartered away for seventy-five cents, (For that is the amount that severed us, taking your own Word for it) I shall remit that amount with the greatest of Pleasure; and Pleas accept my thanks for the great favor you conferred by giving my name a Place in your Dr. column.

1st. You say you are SORRY that "a year's Reading the T S. has done me no more good.

My Dear Sir do you go to the gutters of your city or some filthy stagnant Pool to wash, and expect to come away clean and refreshed?

Or when you want to breathe the pure fresh air, do you go to some back filthy alley or some loathsome dark dungeon? Or are you in the habit of going in a cellar or a coal bank to see the sunshine; Instinct would teach you better than that, if nothing else.

I intend to go to the fountain head for all Pure good and

enobling thoughts to guide my steps in this world let that be to sustain my Physical, Moral, spiritual or mental.

2d. You think I am as much in the dark as though I had never seen a "liberal Paper." Mr. Bennett Pleas tell me what good has such liberal Papers and free speech done in the world? We only have to look at France, Blood Washed Infidel France, and that answers all.

Infidelity was the mother, Disbelief and Obscenity the Cradle that nursed and cradled the viper that poisoned her life's blood.

You say, "the thoughtful are reaching for a higher phase of truth." A Heard of men that can see more beauty and morality in the Koran (than in the Bible) a Book that has very little novelty or Originality to recommend it, the most material parts of it being borrowed from the Old Testament or the New, and eaven these are so deformed by passing through the hands of the impostor, who vitiates and debases everything he touches. In the Koran, Mahomet continually bosting of his own merits and the Excelencies of his book the son of Mary is the opposite.

3d. When Infidelity triumphs in any heart the hope of imortality is Banished; It crowns the Tyrant Death forever on his Throne and seals the Conquest of the grave over the human race forever, it wraps the tomb in eternal darkness, and suffers not one Particle of the remains of the great, the Wise, the good, of all ages to see the light of eternity; but consigns by an irreversible doom all that was admired, loved and revered in man, to perpetual annihilation. It identifies man with the vilest reptile and levels man to the grade of the meanest weed whose utility is yet undiscovered.

You rob him of everything which could make him dear to himself, and proud of his Existence, it murders all his hopes of future being and future bliss. It cuts the cable and casts away the golden Anchor and sets man adrift on the ocean of uncertainity to become the sport of the Wind and waves of animal passion and appetites untill at last in some tremendous gale "he sinks to everlasting ruin." O skepticism is this thy Philosophy—is this thy Bosted victory over the Bible? And for this extinguishment of

light and life eternally, What do you teach? You teach us to live according to our appetites and Passions, a mear animal life; You might well teach with zeal and exert all your energies for your heaven is only worthy of your efforts and the Purity of your life is just suited to the high hopes of eternal annihilation.

Yours in the hope of a hereafter,

GEORGE SNODE.

P.S. Mr. B. I have confidence enough in your honor as a man and as one of those that is earnestly seeking after "a higher phase of morality" and better code of morals that you will let the readers of the T. S. know that I have Paid the price of lost friendship "75 cents." I would not lose the Friendship of a DOG for that sum much less that of one of the poor deluded sons of Adam.

Respectfully, G. S.

REPLY.—We cheerfully lay the fact before our readers, that Mr. George Snode has sent in the sum of seventy-five cents, which pays for THE TRUTH SEEKER up to the time of his discontinuance. We are obliged to him for this compliance on his part, to the rules of right and justice. The publishing of his letter with our accompanying remarks, has done this much good, if no more. If by the same means, others in arrears—both those who have stopped and those who have not stopped their papers—can be induced to do likewise, we will feel well repaid. Seventy-five cents is not an immense sum to us, but a good many of these together, count up and we find these little amounts very necessary in meeting the bills presented to us.

As to the sum of seventy-five cents buying our friendship or respect, our friend slightly misapprehends us. Though it does cause us to esteem a man higher if he pays what he justly owes, it does not buy our respect for a blackguard nor a falsifier.

It seems our remarks had the effect to draw Mr. S. out—not only his pocket-book, but his piety and historical lore. We only wish he had adhered more closely to the truth in his rejoinder. An Infidel values the truth very highly, and expects to be amenable if he violates it. With a Christian it makes not so much difference; if *he* deviates from the truth, or commits any other offense against morality, the one he depends upon for righteousness and atonement, will, he expects, pay all such debts he may contract, and he hopes to shine even brighter in glory than he who depends upon his own good deeds for happiness and justification.

Mr. Snode says, "when Infidelity triumphs in any heart, the hope of immortality is banished." This is wholly untrue. There are hundreds of thousands in this country, and hundreds of millions in the world who are entirely infidel to the system of Christianity, and yet entertain a bright and cheerful hope of a life beyond the grave; and we think a far more consistent one than the average Christian. True, immortality is a mystery; many cannot understand how organized beings, who had a beginning fifty or seventy-five years ago, can become immortal or never-ending, and they have doubts upon the subject. Others have received proofs that are satisfactory to them, that there is an intelligence outside the body, and that their friends and relatives who have passed out of sight, still exist and retain their identity. Unfortunately, Christianity throws no light upon this subject, and what belief or views it has, were borrowed from the heathen religions which preceded it. It so happens, however, that no belief that may be entertained upon the subject, makes the slightest difference as to the

facts. Whether we exist as individuals after death or not, belief or non-belief in the matter cannot possibly change it in one direction or the other. If there is a brighter world after this, an honest Infidel will donbtless be quite as well prepared for it, as a canting, self-righteous, hypocritical Christian.

Mr. S. says, "Infidelity crowns the tyrant, Death, forever on his throne, and seals the conquest of the grave over the human race forever; it wraps the tomb in eternal darkness, and suffers not one particle of the remains of the great, the wise, the good of all ages to see the light of eternity, but consigns to an irreversible doom, all that was admired, loved and revered in man, to perpetual annihilation." This is also utterly false. There are ten times, yes, probably twenty times as many Infidels in the world who believe in a happy existence after death, as there are Christians. As we just remarked, however, no belief we may hold upon the subject, can make the slightest change in the reality; what we want is the truth, so far as it can be ascertained; and this is what the intelligent Infidel is searching after. The most skeptical view that is entertained, is not so horrible as our friend paints it. It is simply that we return to the same condition we occupied previous to our birth. We never heard any one bewail the death, the horror and the eternal darkness he was in previous to his existence.

What, on the other hand, is the future which the Christian religion holds out to us? It is that ninety-nine-hundredths of the millions of billions of human beings that have existed on the earth, are irrevocably doomed through an endless eternity, to suffer the torments of an excruciating, burning hell. The most ultra-Infidel unbelief is a thousand times preferable

to this horrible doctrine; and if belief could possibly change it at all, commend us forever to a long, quiet sleep, rather than burning and writhing in a terrible hell. The hell-believers seem to think that the tortures of that horrible place are not destined for *them*, but for their cursed neighbors, and especially for the Infidels. But the belief that one millionth part, only, of the human race are to suffer forever in hell, is incomparably worse than the most ultra form of skepticism or Infidelity. In this respect the Christian religion is the most direful, the most abhorrent, of any religion upon the face of the globe. This belief in eternal damnation, endless misery, and ceaseless torture for any portion of the human family is most execrable, and makes God a cruel monster—an infinite fiend.

Mr. Snode has the gentlemanly (?) bearing to speak of Infidels as a "herd of men who can see more beauty in the Koran than in the Bible," and that it contains less novelty, and that its important parts are borrowed from the Bible. This is not correct. *Herd* is not just the word to apply to men, it is more appppropriate for cattle, sheep and hogs. It is particularly inapplicable to Infidels, as they are somewhat scattered over the country, and are hardly numerous enough yet anywhere to get together in herds. As to the Koran being copied from the Bible, it is possible it may be to some extent, as it was written a long time after, but that seems a singular reason why a *Christian* should condemn it. We are no special champion or admirer of the Koran. We believe it to be entirely a human production, as all other books are, and consequently possesses excellencies and imperfections, as nearly all others do. As a "copy" it is far less so

than many parts of the Christian Bible. A large portion of this, is essentially borrowed from the literature of nations older than the Jews, as can be easily shown.

If success is a proof of excellence and truth, the Mahometan religion is superior and more under divine patronage than the Christian. Although some five or six hundred years its junior, it has outstripped the elder, more adherents having flocked to the crescent than have gathered to the cross; and to-day there are one hundred million believers in Mahomet in countries that were once Christian, but where a Christian is now scarcely to be found, except such few as occasionally pass through. In civilization, enterprise and wealth, which are not dependent upon religion, the Mahometans are in the background, but in morality and good conduct they are ahead. There is less murder, less stealing, and less crime of all kinds in Mahometan than in Christian countries.

If, however, the Koran has less "novelty" than the Bible, it also has less of cruelty, slaughter, carnage and bloodshed. In morality, likewise, it is eminently above it. We cannot take the room here to draw comparisons, or point out one case in a hundred where the morality of the Bible is below the Koran, but will cite one chapter, only, which will answer our present purpose. It is the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, where is narrated how Moses, who acted under the direct command of God, sent out 12,000 brigands and murderers to despoil and destroy a peaceful, quiet nation, the Midianites, and how they put all the men to death, captured women and children, together with all their property, consisting in part of 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beef cattle, 61,000 asses and several hundred

shekels of gold, besides jewels and other valuables. These the holy robbers (for they were no better,) took to their camp, but the meek man (Moses) became very angry with the officers and captains of the hosts and said: "Have you saved all the women alive?" "Kill every male among the little ones, and every woman that hath known a man by lying with him, but all the women and children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep for yourselves." In pursuance to these orders, 32,000 virgins, consisting of children, half-grown girls and young women, were divided out pro-rata among the officers and soldiers of the different tribes, to be the helpless victims of their animal lusts, and fifty to seventy-five thousands of defenseless women, mothers, children, babes and suckling infants were fiendishly put to death in cold blood for committing no offense at all; and all this by the command of God. There is nothing like this to be found in the Koran, nor in any of the Bibles of the pagan nations in the world. Nay, take all the cruelty, bloodshed and assassinations recounted in all the other bibles that were ever written, (and there have been many of them,) add them all together in one aggregate, and so much horror and extreme cruelty cannot be found, as is narrated in this one chapter.

We will say more; among all the tyrants, despots and murderers that have lived in any part of the world, whether savage, barbarous or civilized, including all the Neros, Caligulas and Dracos that ever lived, not one of them, nor all of them, in their maddest freaks of cruelty, malice and devilish hate, have ever equaled the horrid recitals of this one chapter. Mr. Snode wishes to compare the morality of the Bible with the Koran; if he is pleased with this aspect of

his idol, we have nothing to say, only that he has a very singular appreciation of goodness and morality.

He also introduces the subject of obscenity. This is a point in which his adored book is so vulnerable it would seem better for him not to mention the subject. Why, the Christian Bible is one of the most obscene books in the world; and those which are no more so, are prohibited by law, and men are sentenced to imprisonment at hard labor, from five to fifteen years for selling them! Why, George Francis Train within the last thirty months was imprisoned in the foul and noisome "Tombs," of this city, till his life and health were seriously endangered, for simply publishing some quotations from the Bible, without a word of comment. We could call attention to a thousand obscene and impure passages of the Bible, but lest the pious "Comstock" get after us, and to spare time and room we will pass them by for the present. We are, however, free to say that in all the other bibles, and we may add, also, all the other books of the world, (except the small number of obscene books alluded to,) not a tenth part of the obscenity can be found, that exists in the Bible of the Christians;—a pretty source, indeed, from which to look for morality and purity.

Mr. Snode, in his flings at Infidels, refers to France and the French Revolution, to show how much inferior are Infidels to Christians. The allusion is not a happy one for him. The facts in the case are very damaging to the Christians. True, in the French Revolution there was a great rebound from the political and religious tyranny under which the people had been groaning for centuries, and it is only natural that, under such conditions, as in many similar ones in

changes of governments and dynasties, excesses and wrongs should be committed; thus, during ten years known as the French Revolution, not exceeding four thousand executions of criminals and political offenders took place, all together.

Admitting, to please Mr. Snode, that Infidels were responsible for all this,(which is by no means true, as a large share of these executions took place under the avowal of the existence of a God,) how does it compare with Christian rule? We will, for instance, take a single day, or rather a single night, of Christian work in the same France, when, by pre-concerted arrangement, and by the direction of priests, over forty thousand men, women and children were assassinated and cruelly put to death, not for political offenses, but for opinion's sake; and this wholesale, bloody massacre in the metropolis was followed up in the provinces in the three following days by a slaughter of twenty thousand unfortunate mortals, making sixty thousand lives taken by Christians in the kingdom. A more cruel, infamous and bloody piece of business was never known; and when the intelligence reached the ears of the Pope—the head of the Christian Church—he was greatly rejoiced at it, and ordered *Te Deums* to be chanted in honor of the *good work* thus performed. If the executions of the ten years named, reached but four thousand, they make but a small show compared with the sixty thousand, in round numbers, which Christians so basely and fiendishly slaughtered within four days.

Does Mr. Snode like this picture of *Christian* France better than that of *Infidel* France? In truth, very few of the executions during the French Revolution are chargeable to Infidelity. They were political,

not religious. Infidels have never persecuted their fellow men for not believing as they do themselves. This business is monopolized almost entirely by Christians.

We cannot undertake to give one case in a thousand of Christian persecution, or even a minute fraction of the enormities the Church has committed. It would take volumes to contain a brief recital of them only. One has but to read the horrible details of the bloody work of the "Holy Inquisition," which existed under the immediate control of the Church for five hundred years, and under whose infernal tortures, hundreds of thousands of innocent people were most cruelly mangled and murdered; of the relentless and exterminating persecutions for years visited upon the unhappy Albigenses and Waldenses, by which scores of thousands of men, women and children were tortured out of the world under the most cruel and damnable circumstances; of the wars of the Crusades, by which a great effort was made to exterminate Infidels and unbelievers, and by which millions of all ages, sexes and classes were sent to bloody graves by those emissaries of the Church. We say one has but to read these historical facts to be entirely convinced that in all the world there has been no such bloody persecutions—such continued and relentless slaughter as the Christians have been guilty of. All the religions the earth has been cursed with, falls in this respect, far behind the Christian religion. Pagans and heathens cannot compare with them for cruelty, persecutions and horrors.

Mr. Snode's enquiries as to what good Freethought, Free Speech and a Free Press have done in the world, are too insipid and senseless to even merit an answer.

What have these agencies done? Why, they have broken down and destroyed just the state of things we have here described. But for the existence of Freethought, Liberal Sentiments and a Free Press, the world to-day would be groaning under the same relentless tyranny, the same murderous persecutions, the same mental slavery and degradation which existed in the Dark Ages, when Christianity had entire control. A moiety of Liberalism infused into Christianity made Protestantism; a little more brought out Quakerism; a little more produced Unitarianism and Universalism; another degree leads Spiritualism, and when all superstition is discarded, Liberalism is pure and adulterated—a state of belief as much superior to the bloody and darkening creeds and practices of Christianity, as the glorious sun of day is superior to a common "tallow dip."

Mr. S. talks flippantly about "filthy gutters," "stagnant pools," "filthy back alleys," "dark dungeons," "damp cellars," and all that sort of thing, but we have no taste in that direction, and will leave him in that locality with the superstitions and fallacies of a darker age, while we climb the high grounds of science and truth, and bask in the glorious sunshine of mental freedom and human progress.

[From, THE TRUTH SEEKER of March 15, 1875.]

George Snode Again Heard From.

This gentleman has favored us with eight pages of foolscap manuscript in reply to our remarks in answer to his former letter in No. 12. He failed to pay full postage on his document, and we had the oppor-

tunity of advancing six cents upon it, and we are quite sure we paid its full value. It is such a mass of cant, twaddle, bad grammar and insolence, that we cannot spare the room for it, believing we can give our readers matter they will appreciate more highly. In the few quotations and remarks we have to make, we shall endeavor to do Mr. Snode no injustice.

First. Mr. Snode takes us to task for calling the Catholics *Christians*, and says: "Catholicism is a mixture of Judaism, Paganism and Christianity." That the Catholic Church took much from the Jews and the pagans we will not deny—in fact, its theology is mainly made up from the latter source; but it is, nevertheless, *the* Christian Church; and our friend is narrow in his views and sense of fairness to deprive them of this honor, if such it be. Protestantism got all its Christianity—its whole stock in trade—from the Catholic Church. When Luther and his compeers protested against the Pope and the Church of Rome, it was not against the dogmas or doctrines of the Church, but simply against the power and government of the Pope; in short, he wished to be Pope himself. Every dogma, every superstition, and every sacrament was retained—the same trinity, the same Virgin Mary, the same Redeemer, the same Cross, the same Sunday, the same Devil, the same Hell. The Protestants obtained everything they have, in the way of *creed*, from the Catholics, save such modifications as they have presumed to make, and are as legitimately children of the Catholic Church, as the latter is the direct offspring of Judaism and Paganism.

Second. Mr. Snode says, "Christians never persecute," and wishes to evade the odium of the extensive persecutions perpetrated by the Catholics upon the

ground that they, the Catholics, were not Christians. This is very cool. He, of course, thinks Protestants are Christians. Have they never persecuted? When Luther denounced Copernicus as a *fool* because he declared the earth was round and revolved upon its own axis; when John Calvin burned Michael Servetus at the stake with a slow fire, because he held there was but one God, was not that persecution? Was he not a Christian when he transferred to writing those memorable words: "Whoever shall contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death, willingly and knowingly incurs their very guilt"? Was not the meek reformer, Melancthon, a Christian when he approved Calvin's burning Servetus to death, and declared that his body should have been chopped to pieces and his bowels torn out! Was not Munzer, a disciple of Luther, a Christian, when at the head of some forty thousand turbulent fanatics he ravaged the whole country and scattered devastation and destruc tion? Were not the Protestants of the Established Church Christians, when they persecuted to death in England, Scotland and Ireland, not only Catholics, but Covenanters, Dissenters and Quakers? Did not Claverhouse act under the orders of the bishops and priests of a Protestant and Christian Church when he roved around the country with a band of marauders and cut-throats, killing and slaughtering indiscriminately such persons as dared think for themselves and dissent from the Established Church? Were not the Puritans of New England Christians, when they tortured and put to death in various ways unbelievers, Quakers and the hapless mortals they claimed were bewitched? We have seen the tree on Boston Common on which a woman was hung by Puritans

for being a Quaker. Were not these Protestant Puritans Christians? If they were not, will Mr. Snode inform us where to find them? Will he still tell us, "Christians do not persecute"? Verily, the Protestants, in proportion to the power they have had, have shown the same intolerance, the same cruelty, the same bloodthirstiness, the same disposition to persecute skeptics and unbelievers that Catholics have ever shown. They are the legitimate children of a sanguinary, remorseless, blood-thirsty parent.

Third. Mr. Snode says: "I am astonished at your ignorance, or your entire lack of honesty in your quotations from the Bible and from history." With such an amount of astonishment, and upon making such a charge against us, he ought to be able to point out wherein we have been so ignorant and so dishonest, which he could easily do if we were guilty, but he fails to mention a single instance, and we are left to conclude it is he that is dishonest, and that his dishonesty is only equaled by his insolence. What right has a man to charge another with misquoting and dishonesty, and not point out the paragraph and passage where the misquotation occurs? We insist that we quoted correctly, and that he has accused us falsely.

Fourth. Mr. Snode attempts to apologize for the cruelty of God, or Moses, in slaying all the Midianites, men, women and children, save the virgins (who were kept for the use of the soldiers,) upon the ground of their wickedness. We can, perhaps, understand the beauty of this justice by examining for a moment the nature of this Midianitish wickedness When "Israel abode in Shittim the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and they called the people unto the sacrifice of their gods, and the people

did eat and bowed down to their gods." (Num. xxv: 1, 2.) This was the offense, and it certainly seems the Israelitish men were equally to blame with the Midianitish women. The women could not very well force the men to commit crime with them against their will. If it was just that the women and the whole nation of Midianites should be put to death, ought not the men of Israel to have been punished also? Were the women wholly guilty and the men wholly innocent? How much better was it for thirty-two thousand Midianitish virgins to be divided among the Israelites for their base uses? The justice of Phineas the priest was more equal, to say the least, when he rose, and with a javelin run through the bodies, killing instantly, the Israelite man, Zimri, and the Midianite woman, Cozbi, who had been acting as man and wife together. In this case the same severe punishment meted to the woman was extended to the man; but in God's dealings with the two nations, though the Israelitish men were equally as guilty as the Midianitish women, the latter nation were all cruelly put to death, except the young girls who were reserved for a worse fate, while not one of the former nation was hurt at all. If Mr. Snode thinks this is a fine specimen of Divine justice, he is welcome to all of it and we will go without.

Fifth. Our friend labors hard to make out that Infidels would persecute just as badly as Christians if they only were numerous enough and had the necessary power. As such a thing has not occurred yet, it is hardly worth while for him to borrow trouble about it. He reminds us, somewhat, of the silly girl who stood before a heated oven and burst out with a "boo ooh," and said, "*if* I was to get married, and *if* I

should have a little baby, and *if* that little baby should fall into this oven and be burned to death how bad I should feel; boo hoo hoo."

Mr. Snode tries to make Infidels and skeptics responsible for the deaths of Socrates and Jesus Christ, as well as the persecutions of the early Christians. We object to shouldering this responsibility. Socrates, the Grecian philosopher, was put to death by religionists who believed in gods and dogmas that he could not accept, and he died like a brave, noble man.

As to Jesus Christ, there is great doubt whether such a person ever had an existence. If he had, we will be glad if Mr. Snode will demonstrate it to us. If he did live and was put to death it was done at the instance of God's "peculiar people;" and as it was in the divine programme that he should thus be sacrificed that a small percentage of the human family might gain the favor of heaven and escape the torments of hell, then there was certainly great virtue in thus carrying out heaven's grand plan of salvation and putting the young god to death. Mr. Snode does wrong to deprive the Jews of this honor, and at the same time make false accusations against Infidels. As to the early Christians, their history is extremely mythical. About the first reliable accounts we have of persecutions connected with Christianity was after Constantine became the first Christian Emperor. He caused to be put to death his own father-in-law, his brother-in-law, his nephew, his wife, his eldest son, and by his edicts and armies he caused hnman blood to run like a river. It was this man who, like St. Paul, saw a vision in the heavens and was instantly converted; but he was the first man of mark in the Christian

Church, and one of the worst and bloodiest tyrants that ever lived.

No, Mr. Snode, we accept none of the honors of persecuting Christians, for we have never done it. Persecuting for opinion's sake is almost entirely a Christian characteristic, to which Infidels lay no claim whatever.

Sixth. Our correspondent refers again to the times of the French Revolution; in fact, it seems to be a favorite theme with him, as he fancies he thereby proves that Infidels have persecuted. He seems to be unable to comprehend, or not honest enough to admit the fact, that the miseries and troubles of those times were of a political character, and not religious; and grew out of the excesses and wrongs which had preceded them. In proof of this, Atheists and Christians alike went to the guillotine, not for the sake of religious opinions, but political, being, as was supposed, inimical to political liberty, or to the parties then in power. Thomas Paine, one of the greatest Infidels of the day, came near being executed, as it was decided by the ruling powers that he should be beheaded, and he only escaped by an accident. The charge against him, as against others, was solely of a political character. Not a single person during that "reign of terror," was put to death because he was a Christian, or because he was not a Christian, because he was an Infidel, or because he was not an Infidel, and Mr. Snode ought to inform himself of the fact, and not again make the false accusation, that Infidels at that time persecuted because of the religious opinions of their opponents. The charge is entirely devoid of truth, and it is only an ignorant or a dishonest man that makes it.

Seventh. Mr. Snode winds up his homily by expatiating upon the superior knowledge which a Christian possesses over an Infidel as regards his views and convictions, and the superior advantage he enjoys. We quote him:

"The Christian first *believes* and then *knows* Christianity to be divine. There is one advantage which the Christian has over the skeptic; the skeptic never can disprove, even to his own satisfaction, much less to any other person's, that the Christian's experience is not what it purports to be. The Christian has proven that Christianity is true by his own experience, and the skeptic can never, by his experience, prove it to be false." And again, "We, then, who submit to the government and guidance of our Savior, have these advantages over the skeptic; we have reason, true philosophy and experience all on our side. We have the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Rich or poor, noble or ignoble in the world's reckoning, we can always eat our food with gladness, sleep sweetly, and contemplate Nature with adoration. The consciousness that we have the eye of God always upon us and his arms encircling us, is worth more than all the promises of all the Atheists, Deists, Skeptics and Freethinkers upon earth. On their philosophy, we have nothing to fear. We are happier while we live—if Christians—inconceivably happier, and, on their theory, cannot fail to be as happy after death. But on our principles they can promise themselves only the happiness of a stall-fed ox here, and everlasting destruction hereafter. This is a fair contrast of the two systems. We have the present and the future; they have the present only in part, and nothing in future but utter darkness and everlasting night. If immortality be worth anything, it is worth everything which imagination can grasp. This is the *boot* between the two systems—animal gratification and death—Jesus Christ and immortality. The Materialist will choose the former, but the rational philosopher and the man of common sense will choose the latter."

All this is simply "bosh and nonsense." The Christian has no more assurance that his views are correct, knows no more about the correctness of his experiences, has no more advantages, knows no more about the eye of God, or his encircling arms, has no better appetite, enjoys his meals no more, sleeps no sweeter, has no more claim upon immortality and a future existence, than the believers in any other system of religion in the world! It is mere arrogance or stupidity that makes Mr. Snode, or any other Christian, set up this claim. If there is a God, he is everywhere, his eye is as much upon the unbeliever as the believer, his arm encircles as far around the Infidel as the Christian. Nature looks as beautiful to the one as the other, and the rays of the sun and the gentle rains fall upon him just as pleasantly.

The Christian has no exclusive or patent right upon God nor a future existence. If there is a God, he is just as near to us as to him; if there is a future existence, we shall be there and enjoy it just as much as the most arrogant Christian. Belief nor unbelief in a future state neither causes nor prevent its existence, neither is it an invention of the Christian nor his Christ. If it is the birthright of one human being, it is of the entire race, and no priest nor bigot can deprive us of it. Neither can they send us to everlasting night nor to the flames of a sulphureous hell. These are but the figments of a diseased imagination, and have no terrors for a truly sensible man. The same Deity that presides over this state of existence, presides over that. He is ever the same, and burns and torments no more there, than he does here. All will be the recipients alike of his favors there, the same as here.

304

Christians are welcome to the proprietorship of the Devil and his hell. They were invented by priests to frighten ignorant, silly people into their support, and never came from the Deity that presides over the Universe. It is an infernal belief, and detracts from the happiness of all who harbor it; therefore. Christians are less happy, have less real love of God, less sympathy for their fellow-men than Infidels. The Christian has nothing that is good, nothing that is desirable, that we have not equally as large a share in, while we are freed from the fear of the Devil, the burnings of hell, the harassing doubts and the constant uncertainties which he must inevitably feel if he believes what he pretends to. We yield to him entire ownership in his Satanic Majesty and his brimstone hell. They are his principal stock in trade and occupy a large share of his thoughts. We relinquish them with all the grace in the world, having no use for them, either here or hereafter. Mr. Snode, good bye.

The Truth Seeker Tracts.

If you want terse, trenchant reading matter, to act as "Eye-openers," in doing "Missionary Work," convenient to hand to neighbors, friends and all enquiring persons, send for a supply of these valuable little evangels of truth.

They range in price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount is made to those purchasing in quantities. They are so low in price, that thousands of generous-hearted persons can afford to buy them for gratuitous distribution. Too many of them cannot be spread broadcast over our land. Sent, post-paid, by mail.

Published by D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

Honest Questions and Honest Answers.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[The following appeared in the The Truth Seeker of June 15, 1875.]

The following interrogatories were sent us by a friend in quest of truth and they are entitled to our respectful consideration. We claim to know no more of "the unknowable" than common mortals, but we will cheerfully answer these questions according to the best light we have.

Mr. Editor:—Having read a few articles in your paper with regard to the conflict between Orthodox Christianity and Naturalism, I would like to ask a few questions suggested thereby.

1. Do you not think that a universal disbelief in the Bible and its sacred teachings, will eventually lead to the universal demoralization of the human race?

2. Do you believe in a great first cause, the author of nature and yet its superior, whose character and attributes are infinite and eternal?

3. If there is no God but nature, in what part of material creation shall we look for intelligence?

4. Do you not think it more reasonable and truthful to suppose that the inferior races of men are evidence of the result of degeneracy, rather than of natural development from a still inferior race?

5. How can an inferior animal produce its superior on strictly natural principles?

6. If the laws of nature are fixed, who can turn them aside?

7. If plants grew into animals, and animals into human beings, in the long ago, why is it not so now?

8. Do you believe in the infinite progression and development of good and evil?

9. Will the present ungodly state of society eventually result in the reformation and happiness of the human race, independent of divine agency?

10. Does it not require more faith to be a sceptic than to be a Christian?

11. Is it easier to believe in nature than in God?

12. Do you know everything that you believe?

13. Please give us the name and articles of your faith, and oblige A TRUTH SEEKER.

REPLY.—We confess to a partiality for the pseudonym our correspondent uses; and, without stopping to enquire whether his interrogatories might not be better stated, we proceed to reply to his questions.

ABOUT THE BIBLE.

1. This we must answer in the negative. We do not think a general disbelief in the inspired character of the Bible will lead to universal demoralization of the human race. We believe the Bible to be a human production, in every sense of the word, the same as every other book that has been written or printed, including the ancient Puranas and Vedas of India, the Shaster of Persia, the Pymander of Egypt, the Koran of Arabia, and the book of Morman of our own country. If this is *true*, we think not the slight-

est injury will result from its being universally accepted. Truth will not produce demoralization, locally nor generally.

In point of language, correct composition, fine sentiment, beautiful imagery, or pure morality we fail to see that the Bible is at all superior to very many other books which men have written, while we find much in it that is crude, coarse, indecent, absurd, extravagant, improbable and impossible. In short, we cannot find a passage in the whole book that a man of fair intelligence could not easily write, and that has not been equaled many times and very often surpassed.

It seems to be a compilation of writings, differing widely in character, by different persons, written in very different eras, and with different objects and motives. It may have been well designed for the wants of mankind in the ages in which it was written, but it appears very imperfectly fitted to our time and the present intellectual condition of the world.

There is very little authority for asserting it to be the "word of God." Very few of the writers of the book claimed they wrote at the command of God, or or that they even were inspired. And the parts of the Bible which are more especially pronounced inspired, among which may be named the Prophecies and the Book of Revelations, are more unmeaning, more incoherent, more unreliable and more like the ravings of a lunatic than the other parts. No one can reasonably claim it is necessary for a person to be *inspired* to write a historical account of the generations of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or the incidents, adventures, successions of kings, wars, battles and reprisals of the Jews, any more than of the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Britons or the roving,

barbarous hordes of the north of Europe, called "Goths and Vandals." If it is not necessary for a historian of the Gauls or the Russians to be inspired, why any more a historian of the Jews?

It also would appear no more necessary for a biographer of Jesus to be inspired in relating the incidents of his life and the events connected with it, than of Mahomet, Alexander, George Fox or Joseph Smith. Why is it any more probable that Matthew and Luke were inspired to write the life of Jesus than Strauss, Renan, Scott, Beardsley, Henry Ward Beecher and scores of others who have essayed to write his life, and *all* upon very insufficient data?

When a man has written a book or a pamphlet, and says at the beginning or end that God inspired him to write it, we have perfect liberty to believe him or disbelieve him according to the evidence presented to our minds; but when books are presented to us whose authors' names even, are unknown to us, are not given in the books, whom nobody has any means of knowing, and which make no claim to being inspired by the Creator of the worlds, we cannot understand how any man, or any number of men, priests or laymen have the authority to declare to us we must believe it is absolutely the word of God, or be damned forever. Until we meet a person who has better facilities for knowing the origin of the books of the Bible than ourselves, and has superior authority to enforce his opinions upon our minds, we shall continue to exercise our own best judgment upon this, the same as all other subjects.

We are aware many people believe the Bible has wielded a moral influence in the world vastly superior to that of any other book. We are compelled to dissent

from this view. We find not in the book any better nor purer morals than are found in other books, nor do we discover that the nations and peoples who have accepted it as the word of God, have lived more morally or peacefully than those who did not so accept it. The reverse is the truth. In the first place, the greater portion of the morals of the Bible are of a very questionable character. It treats largely of carnage, bloodshed, unjust wars and oppressions which the God of the Jews and the Christians often incited, and in which he fondly participated; and aside from the foul books which the police authorities of our country, under the class *obscene literature*, prevent from being circulated or sold, there is no book to-day in the English language which contains so much that is indecent and unfit for the rising generation to read, or which is so much an apology and authority for incest, bigamy, polygamy and excessive sexual intercourse as the *Holy Bible*. In these regards the Puranas, the Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Shaster, the Koran, the Talmud and thousands of other books are superior to it.

As an illustration of the immoral character of the Bible, we have only to state the case of George Francis Train, who was imprisoned six months in a damp, gloomy, noisome prison in this city, called the Tombs, for no other offense than publishing a few quotations, without a word of comment, from that book. What other book is there in existence, which is recognized by decent people, for quoting which a man in this nineteenth century would be confined six months in a foul, unhealthy prison, to the great injury to health, comfort and business?

Were a book to-day, introduced to the people of this

country, containing all the indecencies, all the extravagance, all the contradictions and all the imperfections of the Bible, and no claim were set up that it was inspired or God-given, it would not be tolerated among decent people, and would be unceremoniously tabooed from all cultured society.

It is a well-known truth that the nations who have accepted the Bible as the word of God, have been vastly more murderous, bloodthirsty, warlike, oppressive, unjust and otherwise immoral than many other nations who were not governed by it at all, and that there are many nations now in existence who know nothing of the Bible, who, in point of morality, sobriety and honesty are far ahead of nations who acknowledge it as their guide. Volumes of proof can be given to sustain these propositions.

The Bible is, by its adorers, converted into an *idol.* They fall down before it, look up to it, worship it and revere it for imaginary excellences it does not possess, as is nearly always the case in idol-worship. It is also used as an engine by priests to elevate themselves into power, and is by them wielded like a sceptre over the heads of the people in the way to perpetuate their own authority and to cause the people to be subservient to them. Everything they demand or command is with a "*thus saith the Lord.*"

We do not say there is no good in the Bible, that it contains no beautiful language, no elevated sentiments; on the contrary, we cheerfully admit it does, but we do assert it contains nothing truer, nothing better, nothing more beautiful than is found in other books which lay no claim to having God as author. The Bible having been written by persons who knew little or nothing of the truths and discoveries of modern science, philos-

ophy and art, it almost necessarily teaches much that is untrue, much that is worthless, and much that is pernicious.

The claim so persistently urged by Bible-idolators, that the sacred book of the Jewish nation has been the grand cause of the civilization of modern times, is absurd and unjust. Theological ideas doubtless have had much to do in moulding the character of civilization, but to it only rightfully belongs a fractional part. Natural and physical causes have much to do in determining the civilization of any portion of the earth's surface. The soil has very much to do with civilization. When this is rich and encourages agriculture, civilization advances rapidly, bringing in wealth, literature and refinement. In sterile or barren countries, where the inhabitants are compelled to pursue a wandering, nomadic life, and cities are very sparse, barbarism long holds sway, and civilization advances slowly. The civilization of mountainous regions differs from that of level countries, and the inhabitants show marked differences in habits and characteristics. Climate has also much to do with civilization. The temperate zones are far more favorable for advanced civilization and an enlightened intellect than the torrid or the frigid zones. Every belt of the earth's surface exerts a varied influence in the process of mental advancement.

Prof. Draper, in his incomparable work, "The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," gives us much light upon this subject. In speaking of the basic causes of civilization, he says, it "depends upon climate and agriculture," and teaches that the metereological condition of different countries has much to do with intellectual advancement. Very

rainy countries are unfavorable to the most rapid mental progress, and he argues that the rainless condition of Egypt had greatly to do in the early civilization of that country. He shows that the gulf stream had much to do in determining the civilization of Europe. Buckle, in his "History of Civilization in England," corroborates much that Draper teaches, and accords to literature and knowledge prominent places in the causes of civilization. The purer the literature of a country, and the more unmixed it is with myths, superstition, legends, fallacies and absurdities, the more rapid is the advance in civilization. These are the characteristics in the Bible which have retarded civilization and for centuries kept a mistaken theology in the front, when, of course, a rational mentality was forced into the back-ground. It is doubtless true, the Bible has retarded civilization on the earth, and had it had no existence, mankind to-day would be farther progressed in intelligence, happiness, civilization and truth than they now are.

Believing all this to be indisputable, we have no apprehensions of any bad effects that will arise from the Bible being substituted in the world by rational truth, knowledge, science, benevolence, morality and purity vastly superior to that which it contains.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE.

2. We have also to answer this interrogatory in the negative. The subject is beyond the reach of man's vision, and probably we will never fully know the character of the moving, controlling forces of the Universe. We can only come to such conclusions as our best reason points out. We believe strongly in the Universe, in its infinity, its immensity and its eternity; but we do not believe it had an inventor.

author or creator. It contains and comprises all the material, all the forces and powers that exist, and outside of it there is nothing. It is itself the cause of all results and all existences. As we find it is utterly impossible to create one atom of matter from nothing, or to reduce one atom to a state of non-existence, we can have a fair idea of the eternity of the entire Universe, and the absurdity of the supposition that it was a few thousand years ago, by a power outside of itself made from nothing.

The earth—the solar system—the entire Universe may once have been in a nebular state—a gaseous condition—so rare and attenuated that our atmosphere may be regarded as solid compared with it; so rare indeed that several cubic miles would hardly contain a single grain of solid matter. We say, the Universe may have evolved from this condition by gradual condensations and aggregations into systems and suns and worlds, and thus have existed myriads of ages to again resolve into a nebular condition. The Universe, we assert, may have repeated this process millions of times, but it never had a beginning; it never was made. There never was a time when it did not exist, nor will there ever be a time when it will cease to exist. It has no supporter and needs none. It is permeated by all the forces that have an existence, and these are a part of it. The Universe is composed of matter and all the powers that pertain to it. Tyndall had this fact in view when he said, he "found in matter all the forms and potency of life;" and a more rational observation was never made.

The idea of the infinity and eternity of the Universe is hard for some minds to comprehend. They think anything so vast and boundless as the Universe

must necessarily have required a creator. But ask them whence came this creator, which must needs be superior to the Universe created, and they will answer you at once, "oh, he always was, he never was made." They seem not to realize the logical conclusion, that if the Universe, being so extensive, required a creator, that this superior creator himself still more required a creator. In this way we may go on imagining creators of creators until bewildered and lost.

It is easy for a common capacity to understand that *space* or *expanse* is necessarily infinite, eternal, limitless, without beginning or end. No one will argue for a moment, that a given amount of space was ever *made*, or that there was ever a time when it was not. It requires then but another step to realize that it is the same with all space and with all the matter contained in it, and that it is necessarily infinite and eternal.

We assume not to say what God is, or whether there is a God; but of this we feel fully assured, that he is totally unlike the being theology has pictured to us. The Deity that *is*, is *in* the Universe and part of it. He exists just as much in the most distant sun the mind can imagine in the farthest remove of space, whose light traveling at a velocity of 200,000 miles a second requires trillions of ages to reach our globe—as in this solar system, as on this globe or in this special portion of it. Hence he cannot be a person, he cannot be a being, he cannot be an individual, he cannot be a local intelligence, he can hardly be a general intelligence. It is possible for no man to say just what he is. But the fable that he once made man from clay; woman from a rib bone; that an apple

cursed the whole world and peoples hell for millions of years; that God was born of a young girl; that his creatures put him to death to appease his own anger, or to satisfy his own sense of justice; that he has his eye constantly upon the 1,500,000,000 of individuals that exist on this globe; that he has the hairs of their heads all numbered as well as the quintillions of beings who preceded them, and that this is the Deity who reigns in, rules and controls countless millions of other worlds, is an idea too preposterous to claim the credence of a sensible person for a moment.

It is vastly easier, it strikes us, to conceive of the *eternality* of a self-existent Universe filling the great *limitless expanse* which ever was and ever will be, than to believe in a local, personal God in the form of a man, with his passions and foibles, whom no one has ever seen or known; who less than six thousand years ago, made from nothing all that exists; who found it necessary to employ a few score of ignorant, unreliable persons, living at different times and in different localities to write a book for him, giving an account of himself and declaring his will to his creatures, and which book has required a few scores of other persons to translate, hundreds of thousands of ignorant priests to interpret, explain and expound to the more ignorant multitudes, but in explaining which they have never agreed, some asserting with immense authority "the meaning is *this way*," and others with equal positiveness declaring it is "*that way*;" but each affirming that unless we take their particular version, and acknowledge them as the mouth-pieces and agents of God we are doomed to endless torture.

We are conscious that the Universe exists: we can see it, feel it and *know* it. We are in it, and are parts of

it; we can understand it is eternal and indestructible. We can comprehend that all parts of it are equally divine; but of a creator of this Universe we know nothing, except what priests and Bible writers tell us, and they know not a particle more about it all than we do.

We acknowledge with profound reverence the great source of life, motion, intelligence and individual existences. These arise from light, heat, magnetism, attraction, chemical affinity and cognate forces yet imperfectly understood, but which are inherent in the Universe and cannot be separated from it.

WHERE SHALL WE LOOK FOR INTELLIGENCE?

3. Our friend's third question is, "If there is no God but Nature, in what part of the material creation shall we look for intelligence?" We answer, in any part where we can find organizations and conditions that produce intelligence. We know of no intelligence that is not the result of organization any more than we know of sight without the optic nerves and organs of vision, or of hearing without the tympanum and organs of the ear, or of muscular strength without the muscles and connecting apparatus to produce it. Intellect, thought, or mind, is not a promiscuous substance floating through space; it is not a primitive element, a separate entity, independent of the forces and materials of the Universe, but is, as we said, the result of organization—an outgrowth of matter—a motion, so to speak, of an organ and its connected nervous system.

We find intellect existing in all grades and degrees, from the lowest to the highest form, and in all varieties as regards quality and quantity, but nowhere without a suitable organization to give it existence.

In the vegetable kingdom we perceive the lowest indications of intellect, though that there is not a measure of it in simple substances when brought into contact, as in the cases of acids and alkalies, metals and oxygen, hydrogen and oxygen, and an infinite number of similar chemical combinations, we will not pretend to say. That there is intelligence in the vegetable kingdom cannot be doubted. It is indicated in the general reaching towards light, as with the potato sprout in a dark cellar in the spring of the year. If a little sunlight steal through a hole or crevice how the delicate shoot reaches towards it! How constantly many flowers keep their faces towards the sun. Who has not witnessed the tendrils of a vine reaching for a limb or cord, or something to cling to and support the growing plant? If there is a support within reach it will find it. This appears to be a low order of intelligence, but commensurate with the conditions calling it forth.

In the animal kingdom we find varying degrees of intelligence, but always in keeping with organs and conditions. An oyster has some intelligence, a fly more, an ant more, a honey-bee more, a hog still more, a dog still more, a horse still more, an elephant more still, and man more than all. He is truly said to be an epitome of all animal existences below him, and the highest expression of divinity in the Universe. In these and numerous other gradations of intellect, or mind, the difference arises from the varied organizations, from the quantity and quality of brain and the character of the nervous system, a part of the connecting apparatus for producing and conveying thought and sensation.

In man great diversity of intellect exists. If each

individuality is a spark from the great central intellect it would hardly be so; but when we realize the interminable differences in organizations, conditions, quality and quantity of brain, together with the ever-varying character of nervous systems, the reason for the great variety of intellects can be partially understood.

The production of intellect depends on several conditions. In the first place a healthy body is most essential. A good brain, a good nervous system, a good stomach, a good digestive apparatus, circulation of good blood, are all indispensable in the production of mind. Proper food, pure air and pure water are of the highest importance in this intricate process, and without them mind cannot exist. As the fuel and water are to the engine; as hay and oats are to the muscular strength of the horse, so is meat, bread and potatoes to the intellect of man. The combustion of the fuel converts the water into steam, whose confined force acting upon the piston causes the engine to move rapidly, and convey with it hundreds of tons in weight. The digestion of the hay and oats imparts to the horse muscular strength sufficient to move bodies ten times his own weight and what also of intellect he possesses. So the meat, bread and potatoes which man eats and assimilates impart to him the powers and forces he possesses, including the intellect or mind. Deprive the engine of fuel, and it must stop; deny the horse his hay and oats and he cannot haul heavy loads, he must stop; deprive man of his necessary food and he soon becomes exhausted. Starve him and he has no muscular strength and equally no mind; before the spark of life flickers out his mind is gone, he is an idiot or a maniac; he has

no intellect. It is well known the labors of the mind are as exhaustive as physical labor, and equally necessitate material food and repose.

Thus we see food produces mind in the same way it produces muscular strength, and that one is the product of matter and organization as really as the other, and that we must look for the best intellect where we find the best organizations and the best conditions.

4. *Do you think it more reasonable and truthful to suppose that the inferior races of men are evidence of the result of degeneracy, rather than of natural development from a still inferior race?*

We do not. The law of progression and development we regard as the order of the Universe rather than retrogression and degeneracy. It is far from complimentary to an infinite, all-wise Creator to believe his works deteriorate and go backward to ignominy and decay. It is the same with the Universe; its law is progress, onward, forward, not retrogression, backwardness and deterioration. True, conditions have very much to do with the development of the human race. It is well known a particular family, tribe or nation may go backward instead of forward; they may sink in the scale of humanity instead of rising in it, but this is always dependent upon governing causes, the effects of which cannot be ignored. It is not improbable, even, that nations and races like individuals, may have their eras, their *life-time*, beginning in infancy, progressing through youth to maturity and old age, but it is evidently a law of the Universe that in the aggregate, the human race gradually progresses in intelligence, morality and in the enjoyment of happiness. Ignorance is the great obstacle to the more rapid advance, and where this is fully re-

moved, and we learn to live naturally, rationally and sensibly in all things, according to the immutable laws which govern our existence, we may expect mankind will occupy a much more elevated position than now; be more healthful in body and mind, less troubled with diseases and afflictions, live to a greater age, be more physically strong, more intellectual, more virtuous and consequently more happy.

5. *How can an inferior animal produce its superior on strictly natural principles?*

It can be done in no other way than upon natural principles; but that it *is* done it is hardly necessary to affirm. We have only to look at the improvements that have been made in the rearing of horses, cattle, sheep and swine to be fully convinced of this. The difference between the zebra and the wild horses of Tartary and South America, and the blooded horses which are the pride of Europe and the United States is very great. The same is true of cattle, sheep and hogs. Our Devonshire, Durham and Alderney cattle, reared under favorable conditions are largely in advance of the wild cattle of the forests and plains. Our Merino and other choice breeds of sheep are a great improvement upon the coarse wild sheep of olden times, the same as our Berkshire, China and Poland hogs are a great advance from the wild hogs from which they descended. The same law of development and improvement that rules in the animal kingdom prevails in the vegetable kingdom. It is well known the numerous and magnificent varieties of apples we now have were produced from the sour crab apple, as all our luscious pears, peaches, and plums were produced by the appliances of culture, art and development, from the bitter, *puckery* wild

pear, the small, sour, wild peach, and the inferior wild plum. In a similar manner the hundreds of beautiful varieties of roses which florists now present us are the product of the wild rose, as the multitudinous varieties of beautiful asters, balsams. cockscombs, dahlias, gladioluses, pansies, petunias, pinks, tulips, verbenas, and other lovely flowers, are the products of the simple wild flowers from which they are the direct descendants.

All these improvements and developments are the result of natural laws, which men have learned and applied.

6. *If the laws of Nature are fixed, who can turn them aside?*

No one can change that which is unchangeable, nor turn aside that which is immovable. The laws of Nature can not be rendered inoperative nor nugatory, but they are unlimited in number, and are applicable to all conceivable conditions and circumstances. It is the proper study of mankind to become acquainted with them to the fullest extent, and to learn to apply them to all the affairs and necessities of life, and not to try to subvert them, oppose them, or live in opposition to them.

7. *If plants grew into animals, and animals into human beings, in the long ago, why is it not so now?*

We cannot say it is not so. These operations take place very slowly, and almost imperceptibly, and it is not at all unlikely some of them are taking place at the present time. The same causes under the same conditions will always produce the same results. This may be regarded as an axiom as unfailing as "twice two are four."

It is, perhaps, not easy to comprehend how one

form of existence evolves into another, and how animal life may proceed from vegetable life, but it is still more difficult to understand how otherwise so many forms of existence came to be. We have come to understand the Universe contains all the forces and powers necessary to produce every result that has ever been accomplished. In the primitive condition of our planet, it was doubtless wholly unfitted for either vegetable or animal life. As it gradually condensed from a nebular condition, it required immense eras for the soil to be converted by means of oxygen and other influences from the primitive rocks into a condition suitable for the production of vegetation, including grasses, herbs and trees. It is reasonable to suppose the first germs of vegetable life were simple and crude, and that the evolution of the thousands of succeeding varieties were a slow and natural outgrowth of the original; and without doubt these evolutions in the vegetable kingdom still continue as new varieties of plants are constantly being discovered. We have shown how man has produced new varieties of animals, fruits and flowers by making use of natural laws, and it is quite as probable nature, by the same laws, produces similar results.

When after the lapse of countless ages, the earth became adapted to the existence of animal life, all the various varieties did not come into existence at once. The simple *animalculæ* and *radiata* were doubtless the first which nature produced, and these after an epoch—the length of which we are unable to judge—came the *mollusca*—shell-fish, then *articulata*—jointed insects and animals, next *vertebrata*, animals with internal skeleton, and divided into reptiles, fishes, birds, and mammals.

While the external forms of all these animals are so different, it is no less true that the whole, after all, are mere variations of a fundamental germ or principle which can be traced as a basis through the whole, the variations being merely modifications to suit each particular variety that exists. Starting from the primitive germ, which we have seen, is the representative of a particular order of full-grown animals, we find all others to be merely advances from that type, with the extension of endowments and modifications of forms required in each particular case; each form, also, retaining a strong affinity to that which precedes it, and tending to impress its own features on that which succeeds.

This unity of structure, as it is called, becomes the more remarkable when it is remembered that the organs, which possessing a resemblance, are often put to different uses; for example, the ribs, become in the serpent, organs of locomotion, and the snout is extended in the elephant into a prehensile instrument. It is equally remarkable that analogous purposes are served in different animals by organs essentially different. Thus, the mammalia breathe by lungs; the fishes by gills. These are not modifications of one organ, but distinct organs. In mamifers, the gills exist and act at an early stage of the fœtal state, but afterward go back and appear no more; while the lungs are developed. In fishes, again, the gills only are fully developed, while the lung structure either makes no advance at all, or only appears in the rudimentary form of an air-bladder. In many instances a particular structure is found advanced to a certain point in a particular set of animals, (for instance, feet in the serpent tribe), although not there required in

any degree ; but the peculiarity being carried a little farther forward, is perhaps useful in the next set of animals in the scale. These are called rudimentary organs and are most conspicuous in animals which form links between the various classes.

We cannot take the space here to enumerate the many instances of similarity of organs in the different varieties of animals ; but in illustration will merely state, that as various as may be the lengths of the upper part of the vertebrated column (back bone) in the mammalia, it always consists of the same parts and the same number of bones. Thus, the giraffe has in its tall neck the same number of bones as the pig, which scarcely seems to have a neck at all. Man unlike most of the mammalia has no tail, but the necessary bones for a caudal appendage exist in an undeveloped state in the *os coccygis* of the human species. The limbs of the vertebrate animals are in like manner on one plan, however various they may appear. In the hind leg of a horse, for example, the angle called the hock is the same part which in man forms the heel; and the horse and nearly all other quadrupeds walk upon what corresponds to the toes of the human race. As these parts are, in many quadrupeds shrunken or compressed into a hoof, so the tail which would otherwise attach to the human subject is shrunken up into a bony mass at the lower extremity of the back. The bat, on the other hand, has these parts largely developed. The membrane, commonly called the wing, is framed chiefly upon bones answering precisely to those of the human hand. In the paddles of the whale, and other animals of its order, are found the same bones as in the more highly developed extremities of the land animals, and even the

serpent tribes which present no external appearance of such extremities, possess them in reality, though in an undeveloped or rudimental state.

If it is difficult to comprehend how so many forms of life as now exist upon this planet should have evolved from one simple germ or a few simple germs, it is certainly more difficult to comprehend that so many separate creations should have been necessary. According to Humboldt and Spencer, there are scattered over our globe at the present time some 320,000 species of vegetable life, and 2,000,000 species of animal life, and if to these are added the numbers of animal and vegetable species which have existed, but have now become extinct the total number would not fall short of ten millions of species. Which is the most probable, that these ten millions of species of organized life are evolutions and modifications of an original germ or germs, or that they were all separate and distinct creations? We decidedly yield our assent to the former proposition.

If it is not easy to understand that all the forms of animal life should have arisen from a single germ, or if it is not clear how the animal kingdom could have evolved from the vegetable, it certainly is not difficult to understand that in the Universe exist, perpetually, the powers and forces necessary to produce all that now is or ever has existed. As no effect was ever produced without a natural cause sufficient to produce it, so these natural causes, operating under all conceivable conditions, necessarily produce an endless variety of results. In the great Universe is inherent all the powers and potency requisite to call into existence all that is or ever was.

If it cannot be fully comprehended how vegetables

can evolve into animals, it can at least be understood that the two kingdoms approach each other so closely as scarcely to be separated. There is animal life so closely bordering upon the vegetable that at first it would appear to be the latter. The *hydroosa* and the sponge family are samples of this class. On the other hand, there are vegetables possessing the characteristics of animals to a wonderful extent; and as illustrations we have but to mention the plants recently discovered both by Professor Darwin in England, and Mary Treat in this country, which not only catch animals, but digest them and appropriate them to their sustenance and growth. It is little more wonderful that one kingdom should evolve into the other, than that each should approach the other so closely and partake of the special province of the other to such a remarkable extent.

In connection with this subject, we will call attention to the fact that nature seems to evolve or adapt different forms of life to the varying circumstances in which it is placed. Thus certain kinds of plants growing in, and located where rain seldom falls, and requiring a store of moisture for their nourishment, are found to be provided with a cup-like vessel surrounding the stalk to retain water after a shower. This *cup* or *pitcher*, as it is sometimes called, is not a new organ, but simply an evolution or modification of a leaf of the plant So fish, having eyes and good sight, if kept and propagated in the dark, although they retain their eyes, they become entirely useless, and the fish are "stone blind." If, however, they are brought into the light, by its magic influence their sight is gradually restored until they see again as well as ever. Indeed, we are hardly able to estimate the

subtle and mysterious influence this wonderful element—*light*—exercises in the production of organs of vision. It seems to have the power to call forth organs of sight when needed, while animals who live perpetually in the dark have no eyes and no sight.

8. *Do you believe in the infinite progression and development of good and evil?*

According to our comprehension of this question, we answer, Yes. As we believe in the infinite progression and development of all material substances, we necessarily must believe in the progression of good and evil. Here it becomes necessary for us to define what we understand by "good and evil." They are simply relative terms. Every thing that exists is susceptible of becoming good or evil, according to the use that is made of it. There is nothing so good but if improperly used it may become an evil, and there is in existence nothing so bad but what is positive good if properly and legitimately used. Thus, fire, which in warming us in cold weather, and in cooking our food, is so great a good, when it is out of its proper place and burns our dwellings and destroys towns and cities, it is an evil of immense magnitude. So, water, which in floods, torrents, and devastating streams is a great evil, in the imperceptible dew, in the gentle rain, in sparkling springs, in murmuring rills, flowing rivers, and the great ocean, over which proudly float ships and steamers—in the multitudinous ways in which it refreshes thirst and sustains life, it is an indispensable good. So it is with food, alcohol, clothing, exercise, pleasure, the impulses, the passions, and every substance and every quality in existence—properly and wisely used they are all good, but when improperly used they become evil.

We believe in no personal good nor personal evil constantly warring with each other—no personal God, no personal Devil. These myths are the outgrowth of ignorance, and are deservedly passing away as the light of truth shines upon the world, together with the belief in witches, gnomes, fairies, genii, hobgoblins and demons.

9. *Will the present ungodly state of society eventually result in in the reformation and happiness of the human race independent of Divine agency?*

The word *divine* in this question is somewhat indefinite. If it means the efforts of a personal deity we answer *yes;* if it means *all* that exists, *no.* Our belief is that all that exists is, in its nature *good*, and that everything belongs to the divine system of the Universe. We believe the moral and social conditions of the world will be greatly improved, until the human race is vastly healthier, better, and happier than now. The world *has* greatly improved within the period covered by history, but the advance made is slight compared with what we hopefully trust the future has in store for us. The race has inherently within its nature the elements of unlimited progress, and as it succeeds in dispelling the ignorance and superstition which pernicious creeds and dogmas for thousands of years have fastened upon it, it will rise permanently in worth, usefulness and happiness.

This advance may be slow; the effects of ignorance and defective education in the world are most serious and the tendency to selfishness and the indulgence of passion is strong in man; but still we have great hopes of him. He may still be considered in his infancy. *Forever* is a long time; and when he gets all the knowledge of a scientific propagation of species,

a sensible, healthful rearing of the young, the best social system, with all the numerous etceteras of life he is capable of acquiring, we trust he will be vastly better and happier than now.

What our friend calls the "*ungodly* state of society" we apprehend is the result of disorder and the want of due appreciation of Nature's laws and requirements. It has no connection with any invisible personality, good or bad.

As the laws of health and the science of life become better understood and applied, disease will be greatly banished from the earth. As intelligence and science become thoroughly disseminated, ignorance, vice and crime will correspondingly lessen. As the human race learn that the highest morality consists in doing good to their fellow beings, and that this course produces the most perfect happiness, so will good deeds and kind actions abound, and what is called sin and wickedness will become comparatively unfashionable. and unknown.

10. *Does it not require more faith to be a skeptic than to be a Christian?*

Decidedly not. A skeptic is one who has no faith, but doubts everything. A Christian is one who believes whatever his priest or creed demands of him, regardless of logic, sense or reason. A skeptic takes nothing upon trust—nothing because somebody, who knows no more than he does, commands him to do so. A skeptic and a Rationalist are not necessarily the same. A skeptic is simply a doubter, while a Rationalist is one who embraces the truths of the Universe, the teachings of science and reason so far as he understands them. He is only skeptical upon such subjects of which he is ignorant and does not

accept as truth that which lacks the confirmation of experience and demonstration.

11. *Is it easier to believe in nature than in God?*

We answer, *yes*, if reason is followed and myths and superstitions are discarded; though were we to judge by the numbers of the human race who believe in some kind of a God, we might think to the contrary. In the last five thousand years not less than fifty thousand gods have been manufactured by men, and these have been believed in by countless millions of our race. Where ignorance has most prevailed, there has the belief in a god or gods most abounded. Many volumes would be necessary to recount the great diversity of characteristics and monstrosities these ignorant human beings have ascribed to their gods. The more ignorant and degraded they were, the more crude and depraved their gods, The more warlike and blood-thirsty the nations who have made these gods, the more fond their gods were of bloodshed and carnage, and they have even been called "the god of battles." Bloodshed, slaughter and destruction of life seemed their highest pleasure. The Jews and their God, Jehovah, is a case in point. The more peaceful and inoffensive the nation, the more quiet and undemonstrative their god, and their highest conception of happiness is *rest*. The Hindoos and their God, Brahm, illustrate this phase; they rarely engaged in war, and their god never urged them to battle and slaughter. The European nations, as well as our own, in suit, unfortunately adopted a warlike fighting god, with a religion to match, and the consequence has been these nations have indulged in the most devastating and bloody wars the world has ever known. More blood has been shed and more lives

have been taken in the name of the God Jehovah and the religions that have grown out of a belief in him, than all the thousands of other gods the world has possessed.

As easy as it has been for the ignorant masses to believe in the numerous gods which wily and interested priests have foisted upon them, millions of them never stopping to doubt, to investigate or even to make an enquiry, have blindly and zealously taken the gods thus given them, and have been ready to kill or be killed in their defense; as easy, we say, as it has been for ignorant nations to believe in these gods, to rational, sensible, well informed people, it would to us, seem vastly easier to believe in nature than in any God. Gods are imaginary, mythical personages which ignorant men have invented and devised, possessing as we have seen, different and antagonistic qualities and dispositions, some made of wood, some of stone, some of metal, and some totally invisible, and of which no man, absolutely, knows anything; while nature is the great Universe, containing all the suns, all the worlds, all matter, all life, all existences with all the forces and powers that are. While no reasonable person wishes a god of wood, stone or brass, while the invisible he cannot see nor comprehend, the boundless Universe is always before us, a reality, a power, a totality that for a moment cannot be doubted. To us, then, it seems vastly easier to believe in Nature than in any god.

12. *Do you know everything that you believe?*

We see no special point or pertinancy to this question. All men *know* certain things of which they have positive proof, and these they also believe. They likewise believe certain other things, which to them

seem probable and reasonable, but which they cannot be said to absolutely know. We are no exception to the rule. Probably all men are liable to think they *know* what they really only *believe*. In this tendency we also doubtless participate. The best any of us can do is to exercise the best reason and judgment we possess, to examine and investigate whatever is presented us for our acceptance, and to believe nothing that is not founded in reason, truth, and upon the immutable laws of the Universe. The great error mankind have made, is to *believe* too much without proof, to accept the most absurd claims and the most unreasonable propositions upon the simple assertion of those who really knew no more of the matters involved than themselves. This habit, we trust is passing away.

13. *Please give us the name and articles of your faith.* The name of our belief is known as *Rationalism or Liberalism*. We have never tabulated the articles of our faith, but have not the slightest objection to stating what they are. We claim to believe what appears to us as *truth*, and hold ourselves in readiness to accept whatever new truth is presented to our consciousness and comprehension. We must be our own judge as to what truth *is*, and feel ourselves under no obligation to blindly accept what somebody else may claim to be truth, no matter in what book it may be printed or what class of priests may demand it.

In addition to the points of faith already indicated, we name the following :

1. We believe the true God is the God of the Universe, and exists alike in all that is. Nothing is above him, nothing is below him, nothing is outside of him, all are parts of the great divine system which embraces all substances and all qualities. This God is just and

impartial ; he reveals himself to all alike, and speaks to all alike. He does not whisper privately his will to some obscure individual and commission him to proclaim the same to the world, and demand that it accept it without doubt or question.

2. We believe the highest duty of man and the purest morality consists in our good offices and kind acts to our fellow beings. God neither demands our oblations nor worship, nor does he need them. He is so far above us our actions can neither be any aid or injury to him. Humanity is the highest expression of deity of which we have any knowledge ; to it are due all our service, all our devotion, all our worship. In following this course, the world will be made more intelligent, more moral and more happy than by all the creeds, all the religions and all the gods that have had an imagined existence.

3. We believe good deeds actuated by benevolent motives produce happiness, and that our lives should be spent in cultivating the good and shunning that which is bad and hurtful. That every individual must be his own *Savior*, and can derive no real benefit from an unseen, imaginary personage.

4. It is the duty of all to endeavor to learn and understand the laws of our being, and to be controlled by the immutable laws of the Universe, looking in that direction, in all cases, for guidance and information.

Without detaining our readers with a more detailed statement of what we believe, we will name some things we do not believe.

1. We do not believe the Bible account of the creation of the Universe is true.

2. We do not believe God ever delighted in, or incited wars, carnage and bloodshed.

3. We do not believe God ever created a Devil and made a hell in which to punish and torture his creatures to the latest hours of eternity.

4. We do not believe he ever established the great evils, priestcraft and kingcraft in the world to oppress and curse the human race for thousands of years.

5. We do not believe God ever co-habited with a young Jewish maiden and thereby begot a son half god and half man. This idea appears so entirely a borrowed one from prior heathen mythology we give it no credence at all. If there was such a person as Jesus Christ, he had a natural father, the same as every other being who came into the world, and was no more God than any other good man.

6. We do not believe any human being is to be eternally damned for not believing that which is impossible for him to believe, and that it is every man's undoubted right to believe and accept that which to him seems just, right and true.

Having now answered our friend's questions; having told him some things we do believe and some things we do not believe, we wish to ask him a few questions, and hope he will reply to them with the same fairness we have endeavored to exercise.

1. If it is necessary the Universe should have been created, is it not just as necessary its author should have been created?

2. Whence came the Jewish and Christian God, and how long has he existed?

3. How could God make the boundless Universe from nothing?

4. Is it likely a good God would make millions of

creatures, and make also a wily Devil to decoy ninety-nine hundredths of them to eternal destruction ?

5. Why did God make the Devil ?

6. If he did not make evil, where did it come from ?

7. What possible good can it do to punish forever countless millions of weak and unfortunate beings ? Can keeping them in torture perpetually, really add to the glory of God ?

8. If God is unchangeable, and always the same, how could he repent on one day of what he had done on another day ?

9. Would it be unjust or unkind in God to rule that all men should be happy in whatever state of existence they may occupy, and if not would it not be unkind in him not to do it ?

10. By what principle of justice can cruelty inflicted upon an innocent person be counted as justification to the guilty ?

11. Is it possible for father and son to be of the same age, or for the latter to beget the former ?

12. If God raised up the priesthood to lead and guide the world, why did he not endow them with more self-denial and virtue than they seem to possess?

13. Is God so influenced by blood, whether of bullocks, rams, he-goats, or his only begotten son, as to forgive the sins of the blackest criminals, while towards countless millions of other unfortunate beings his displeasure continues forever ?

We have propounded the same number of questions our friend asked us. If he will be kind enough to reply to them we will be glad to ask him a few more. Shall we hear from him ?

The Gods of Superstition

AND

The God of the Universe.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[Delivered before the New York Liberal Club, July 23, 1875.]

For thousands of years the world has abounded in gods, and these gods have been the handiwork of man.

As far back in the early history of our race as we are able to penetrate, we find that men have been engaged in inventing and manufacturing gods.

We find, too, that these gods, in point of intellect, culture, refinement, and morality, have always been a reflex of their makers. The more degraded a nation or people, the more crude and coarse their gods. If the god-makers were but little advanced in intelligence, if their reasoning powers were but feebly de-

veloped, their gods partook of the same characteristics, and were monstrosities, often having two or more heads, many eyes, distorted visages, numerous arms, and other deformities. If the nation was warlike and aggressive in disposition, and if they were inclined to brigandage and bloodshed, their gods invariably possessed the same characteristics, and they often commanded their worshipers to engage in wars and carnage, and to despoil the neighboring nations of their wealth and their lives. Without mercy they authorized the most relentless cruelty, debauchery and murder, sparing neither the nursing mother nor the infant at her breast.

If, on the other hand, the nations were peaceful and harmless, if they preferred a domestic, quiet life, if they esteemed rest and indolence, their gods were sure to possess the same tastes and habits, and they did not direct their devotees to wars, carnage and butchery. These gods delighted in peace and tranquillity, and the best conception of happiness and bliss on the part of their makers and worshipers was quietness and rest. The ancient gods of India, Persia and China, are cases in point.

Thus we see that whatever characteristics, habits, and dispositions a tribe, race, or nation possessed, whatever was striking or peculiar in them, was invariably ascribed to their gods. If the character and attributes of the god of a people could be ascertained, there would be no difficulty in determining the nature, the literature, the intelligence, the habits, and the manners of its worshipers. If they were degraded, so were their gods; if they were beastly, so were their gods; if they were gluttonous, so were their gods; if they were cruel, so were their gods; if they were

warlike, so were their gods ; if they were murderous, so were their gods.

In view, then, of the great number of gods that men have made, and the very small portion of them that have been amiable, peaceful, benevolent, and honest, there is great truth and pertinency in the remark that,

"AN HONEST GOD IS THE NOBLEST WORK OF MAN."

[Applause.]

There are, perhaps, few stronger arguments in favor of the early degraded condition of the human race —few clearer proofs of the low and debased state of the primitive tribes of mankind—than the depraved character of the gods they made and worshiped ; and we see that to this day among the crude and savage portions of the race, where the light of intelligence and civilization has but dimly shone, they are still making and worshiping the same class of ignorant and repulsive gods. Nothing but knowledge and science can dispel from the dark minds of these ignorant savages the crude and abhorrent notions of the gods which they still hug to their breasts. It is the same with all superstitions and errors : the light of science and positive knowledge will inevitably drive them back to the dark, noisome corners of obscurity and oblivion.

The earliest conception of an invisible power which primitive man, as he slowly emerged from the plane of mere animal life, entertained, was, doubtless, that it was an enemy—that it annoyed and injured him. The storm, the tempest, the tornado, the burning rays of the summer sun, the killing frosts of winter, he looked upon as enemies ; they caused him discomfort and pain, and in the infantile stage of his intellect

and experience he imagined that these simple operations of Nature were evil powers that delighted to afflict him, and in the unprogressed state of his mind he fancied he could placate them by bowing in the dust before them and offering them worship and sacrifice. As he gained his livelihood by capturing and slaying animals of various kinds he sought to appease those evil powers, and to propitiate them, by presenting them a portion of the animals he had slain.

Not being able to perceive these gods or demons with his visual organs, though he thought they must necessarily have an existence, he soon began to make crude images of clay, wood and stone to represent to his sight the demons or gods he wished to appease and keep in a friendly disposition towards himself. These images he soon came to regard as the real gods, and he feared and dreaded the same, and bowed to the earth before them.

He early began to imagine there were great numbers of these invisible powers, and he readily assigned separate gods or demons to the winds, the streams, the ravines, the oceans, the mountains, the storms, the thunder, the sun, the moon, the day, the night, the four seasons of the year, and so in many other directions. As these gods were multiplied, the fear, the worshipful feeling, the veneration and awe increased, becoming one of the leading traits of primitive man, but all growing out of his ignorance of the simple laws of nature. Could he have understood the causes which produce winds and storms—the conditions of heat and cold, expansion and contraction, light and electricity—he would not in the storm or tempest have felt the awe and fear which an imaginary power excited in his breast.

Thus, we see, ignorance was the cause of his devising imaginary gods and demons. Ignorance is the source, whence have proceeded demons, genii, gnomes, hobgoblins, furies, fairies, nymphs, naiads, sprites, witches and the like. Here was the origin of worship in the human breast. Ignorance and superstition were its parents, and for thousands of years these have been the elements that have fostered and sustained it. Worship is claimed to be a high and holy quality of man's spiritual organization, and inherent in his existence. This is a mistake. It was the result of his want of knowledge, and this want of knowledge has kept it alive. It degrades a man and makes him abject and cringing, and does not elevate him. As man has attained to a higher degree of intelligence, as he has been able to understand that every result which ever occurred in the Universe has been the effect of natural laws and causes, instead of being the work of an angry and fickle Deity, his fears and his tendency to worship have together taken their flight, and he has learned to view all the operations of nature with calmness and imperturbability.

Those who first invented and fashioned the gods, those who assumed to describe their character, their wills and wishes, naturally became their priests; and thus it was soon discovered that the gods must have mouthpieces, through whom to make known their will and pleasure. The gods were found to be of but little use without the priests to speak for them, to proclaim their will, to command for them homage and worship, and to receive for them such sacrifices, gifts and offerings as the priests decided must be forthcoming.

Here originated the order of PRIESTHOOD, which

for thousands of years has been such a burden, such an incubus, such a *curse* to mankind. Gods have been increased by myriads, the crudest images of clay, stone, wood and metal; and animals of nearly all kinds have at one time or another been worshiped as gods, among which may be named cows, elephants, sheep, camels, dogs, cats, crocodiles, snakes, lizards, toads and many others of the most disgusting of the animal kingdom.

In the vegetable kingdom, trees, plants, flowers and even garlics and onions have by ignorant savages been elevated to be gods.

Rivers and fountains have been special objects of worship. We have only to look to the Ganges and the Nile, to see two streams before which untold millions have prostrated themselves in worship.

The sun, moon and stars have also been worshiped and deified by millions upon millions of the human race.

In this way nearly all the objects in the world, at some time or other, by some nation or other, have been blindly worshiped as gods. It would require all the numerals in our system of notation to give the number of objects that poor, benighted man has been induced to worship, and all this endless variety of gods have required priests.

The name of these priests is "legion." It is not in the power of man to compute the vast number of these leeches, these dead weights, these idle and worse than useless mortals the world has been compelled to support.

They have always been a privileged class, an aristocracy, exacting and expensive. They have never been producers but constant consumers, who have always

managed to live upon the toils and labors of others. They have been shrewd enough, too, to secure the fat of the land, to obtain the finest linens, the richest silks, woo.s and furs which the world has produced. They have always claimed that the gods made known their will to them, and commanded them to convey the same to the ignorant multitudes.

It has not been the aim of priests to impart knowledge to their fellows, to teach them that this world and the entire Universe are governed solely by natural laws. If they have understood this themselves, they have purposely kept the masses in ignorance and subordination. They have pointed to their gods as being the governors and rulers of the world; they have purposely concealed the operation of the simple laws of nature, and have superseded them with the whims and caprices of the gods. They have also claimed to have great influences with these deities, and have pretended to be able, by prayers and sacrifices, by incantations and senseless ceremonies, to appease their anger, to remove their animosity, and to secure their gracious good-will. They have assumed, even, to advise and direct the gods, and to tell them, yes, to command them how to manage their affairs in this world.

For these very disinterested services—for their arduous labors in offering prayers and advice to the gods, and in detailing to the multitudes their will and requirements to them—they have, as we have seen, laid heavy exactions upon the people. They have required the first fruits of their land, the fattest of their flocks and herds, and a large percentage of all other wealth, omitting, in no case, that which has been termed "*filthy lucre.*" [Applause.]

They have also exacted a measure of the worship for themselves, which they have demanded for the gods. They have maintained a power and control over the masses in the name of their deities truly marvelous, and more onerous to the people than the support of kings and standing armies.

From the multiplicity of gods and priests have grown the numberless forms of religion the world has had, and these have been more or less crude, according to the degree of development to which the race had attained. The lower grade of religious belief and worship is called feticism or animism. We have glanced slightly at this form. Their gods were low, gross and beastly. Their devotees were full of blind ignorance, slavish fears, and abject superstitions. As mankind progressed in the scale of intelligence, these crudest ideas gradually gave way to a belief less offensive to reason.

In following the current of theological ideas and the development of human thought, we meet with an occasional oasis in the great desert of ignorance and superstition—we are pleased to see the prospect is not always dark and dreary. Though at no time can we find a nationality freed from errors, we gladly hail instances where these exist in a diminished degree. The sun-worshipers of Persia, for instance, were far less degraded than those who worshiped fetiches and images ; they aspired above the low and groveling.

In the early ages of that country they had neither temples nor altars, and considered it impious to make images of divine beings. They ascended mountains and offered sacrifices, hymns and prayers to the whole expanse of the firmament, and more especially to their deity, which was the sun, the center, the source of

light and heat in the solar system. They likewise worshiped the moon, the stars, the air, fire, earth, and water. In short, they may be said to have been worshipers of the Universe.

If worship they must, the objects to which they paid their pious devotions were probably the most suitable ones in nature that they could select. So far, however, as worship is concerned, it could be of no possible benefit to the objects worshiped, nor to themselves. If their devotions had consisted only in due admiration of the great Universe it would have been more commendable, but the sacrificing of animals and the prostration of their bodies upon the earth before their gods, showed they were so far under the same character of superstition that darkened the nations which preceded them.

Much can be said complimentary of the gods they adored ; they were not cruel, sanguinary, nor murderous, like most other gods ; they did not incite wars nor bloodshed, and the retinue of priests which attended upon them, dealt far less in abominable absurdities and impositions. The people recognized in the sun the source of life and enjoyment in this world : without its genial, warming rays there could be no vegetable nor animal existence. It seemed a fitting object for their adoration, and their minds were correspondingly elevated.

Worship of the sun was, doubtless, greatly induced by the knowledge of astronomy which the Chaldeans, Egyptians and ancient Persians had acquired. They had watched and closely studied the motions of the planets and heavenly bodies, and had become well versed in many facts appertaining to them. This knowledge of the starry worlds was unquestionably

the foundation for much of the theology which subsequent nations adopted, though in this they engrafted upon their system much which was absurd and unwarranted.

In addition to heavenly bodies the Persians had other gods—principally Ormuzd—whom they believed to be the creator of all existences. Compared with the great majority of gods that have ruled the children of men he was mild, amiable and harmless. The inculcations of his priests did not breathe terror, bloodshed, nor damnation. The Persian priests, who were called Magi, were, at first, few in number, and were required to be of good moral character, which condition has, unfortunately, not always since been enjoined. [Applause.] In process of time, the priesthood in that country became numerous and powerful, and laid the same exactions upon the people that they have done in other countries.

While Ormuzd was a good god, they also had an evil god, whom they called Arimanes, and who was their great enemy. In their theology, however, they managed to annihilate this evil god, or devil, which is more than our good friends in this country have yet succeeded in accomplishing. We are happy to announce, however, that the evil god of Christian theology, who has for many centuries been a terror to children of a small and larger growth, is rapidly being curtailed in his domain, and there are thousands of good Christians who will now dare to tell you that they hardly believe there is really such a person as "Old Nick," and they are half disposed to let the fables and legends concerning his Satanic Majesty relapse into forgetfulness, along with the witches, fairies, and gnomes of primitive times. [Applause.]

We are disposed, also, to comment favorably upon the gods of the Hindoos. They were chiefly mild and inoffensive, with the exception of Siva, who was the devil of their theology, and was doubtless the progenitor or pattern of the Persian devil, the Grecian devils, the Jewish devil, the Christian devil, the Mohammedan devil, and many other devils who have these many centuries so sadly frightened the poor be-deviled sons and daughters of humanity. [Applause.]

The Hindoos also believed in great numbers of evil spirits, called Rakshasas, with a prince at their head named Ravana.

Their principal gods were, Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Siva, the destroyer. This was a trinity, thousands of years older than the trinity of Christian theology, and was undoubtedly the original from which the latter was copied.

Chrishna was also a god, or rather a demigod, in great favor with the Hindoos. They claimed that he was begotten of a virgin without a natural father, and that he had a small band of disciples who followed him from place to place, whose feet he washed; that he performed miracles, and that he was finally put to death upon the cross by his enemies. This mythology is now positively ascertained to be many hundreds of years older than our Christian system, leaving at least very strong grounds for suspicion that it was the source whence the later mythology was derived. [Applause.]

Much can be said in favor of the mythology of the Hindoos, while, of course, it is also open to criticism. Their gods were not warlike, revengeful, nor malicious. They did not institute bloody and protracted wars, nor did they prove themselves deadly foes to

the human race. Their priests, called Brahmins, were full of metaphysics and mysticisms, rites and ceremonies. Although they were peaceful and non-aggressive in point of wars and robbery, they were extremely aristocratic, and great sticklers for caste and class. In this respect they were not friends to the best interests of human kind. They inaugurated inveterate notions of privileges and exclusiveness which the many years since elapsed have not obliterated, and which have done more to retard the real advancement of that country than any other cause.

Justice requires that India be credited as the parent of the literature and the theology of the world. The researches and investigations made within a few years, in the Sanscrit language, which was once spoken in that country, by such close students as Sir William Jones, Max Muller, and Jaccolliot, have found in the ancient records of India the strongest proofs that thence were drawn many or nearly all the favorite dogmas which later theologians have adopted, and of which such great capital has been made.

Want of time will prevent our doing more than mentioning Egypt and its gods, Osiris, Isis, and numerous others; or the Chinese and their god Fot, together with their great teacher, Confucius, who, five hundred years prior to him of Bethlehem, taught morals as pure, lived a life as spotless, and spent years far more in number, in enlightening his fellow-beings. It was Confucius who, so far as we know, first taught the grand sentiment known as "the Golden Rule." Yes, the maxim, "Do not unto others what you would not have others do unto you," is among the grandest ever enunciated, and was equally so, whether spoken by Confucius or Jesus. In

matter of priority, however, the former has the advantage of several centuries.

We will next glance at the mythology of the Grecians and Romans. The priests of those countries were noted as god-makers. A thousand years before the dawn of the Christian era, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Pluto, Vulcan, Juno, Minerva, Venus, Ceres and numerous other gods and goddesses flourished on high Olympus in all their glory and majesty. The Grecians were gallant enough to admit goddesses into their category of divinities, and accorded them nearly equal rights with the sterner sex. For this magnanimity, they are entitled to a vote of thanks from every person who ever existed, and in that respect, at least, they stand immensely above that triune affair which was since devised, in which all are males—the female element not recognized at all. [Applause.]

The Grecians were an intellectual people; they brought literature, art and science to a point of perfection far in advance of where they found them. They were at times warlike and aggressive, and, as we said before, their gods were of the same disposition. Jupiter was a noted old warrior, and fond of hurling thunderbolts at the heads of the unfortunate wights who fretted or enfuriated him. But he was also, when in good humor, a jovial old fellow, and addicted to pleasure of various kinds. Mars was distinctively a bloody god, and his principal pleasure seemed to consist in wars and carnage.

The sexual intercourse between the gods and goddesses, and between the gods and mortals, is a very noticeable feature of the Grecian mythology, and apparently was carried to excess. The begetting of

gods and demigods seems to have been very lively, until Olympus, the residence of the gods and the heaven of the Grecians, was said to be peopled with over thirty thousand gods, little and big, and it may well be imagined they had a very godly time of it, all among themselves. [Sensation.]

This idea of the gods holding sexual intercourse, either among themselves or with mortals, appears to have been a favorite one in nearly all the ancient mythologies. Even the mythology which prevails in our own time has something of the same character, and, as in most other respects, it seems to have been compelled to take the idea second-hand—the cast-off clothing of older systems.

The Grecian gods, like those of other nations, had multitudes of priests, and, as ever, they were an immense burden to the producing portion of the populace, and contributed largely to the subsequent demoralization and deterioration of the country.

When Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato and others of the old sages came upon the stage of action, they did not acknowledge the gods that were then in power, nor did they bow the pliant knee to the images which represented them. They were *Infidels* as really as are those called Infidels now, who also cannot accept as true another phase of mistaken mythology. Those philosophers taught a higher code of ethics, a purer system of morals, and a truer and more exalted object in life. What was the result? Socrates was arrested, tried, condemned to death, and was forced to drink the poison hemlock. But he died bravely and nobly as he had lived, perhaps the highest type of a brave, honest man that ever lived.

Pythagoras, after spending a useful life inculcating

the highest morals and most exalted sentiments, was, at the instigation of priests and populace—whose god he could not accept—annoyed, persecuted, and finally put to death.

Plato, after the death of Socrates, felt constrained to leave his native country for a time, lest a similar fate should befall him.

We passed over Buddha and his system of theology, which, in most respects, is the least exceptionable of all the religious systems of the world, being democratic and peaceful in character, presenting a higher code of morals, being less aggressive than any other system, having fewer gods than others, and those so near no gods at all, as to be almost unobjectionable. (This paucity of gods obviated the necessity of hordes of priests.)

Buddhism has had the most extensive following of any religious system that ever existed, and fewer wrongs and crimes against the human race have been committed in its name than in any other important system. It is estimated that at the present day there are 400,000,000 of Buddhists on the earth, while counting all the unbelievers in Christian countries, they number but 200,000,000, and still Christian priests have the assurance to claim it as a mark of divine favor, that their religion has spread so widely over the earth. Unfortunately also for their claims to the special favor of heaven, it must be stated that the Mohammedans, though starting six hundred years later, have outstripped them in numbers. It is safe to say that there have lived at least forty believers in Buddhism to one in Christianity.

Happy had it been for the world, if Europe, in place of the criminal theology it adopted, with the

mongrel supplement attached to it, called Christianity, had chosen Buddhism as its religion. Many years of bloody warfare would have been saved the world; millions of lives would have been preserved, and rivers of human blood, instead of rushing in unnatural currents, would have been spared to course in the arteries and veins of men and women, until death in old age liberated them from the cares and toils of life.

We must pass over the ancient gods of Scandinavia, Germany, Britain, Gaul and other ancient European countries. Much could be said of them and of the ignorance and gross superstitions connected with them, but time is passing and we must hasten on.

There *is* an ancient god and an ancient theology to which we must give a passing notice, because the same, by the course of events, has become closely connected with our weal and our woe. We mean Jehovah, the tutelar deity of the Hebrews, and their pitiable theology. We have no desire to shock the sensitive feelings of any person who has a special reverence for this god or this system of theology; for ourselves, we have become so far emancipated from all the faiths of ignorance and error, and have so far withdrawn allegiance from all the gods of superstition that we can speak of this god with the same freedom and unconcern as of any others of the gods we have alluded to.

Our Christian friends can hear the pagan gods spoken of in the most severe and truthful language; they can hear the absurdities and falsities connected with them denounced in the plainest terms without feeling shocked or offended; but when the Jewish god is referred to, except in the most complimentary manner,

they raise their hands in holy horror, and wonder in their simplicity why the "presumptuous wretch" who dare think, and say what he thinks, is not crushed into the earth. They have not yet learned that this favorite god of theirs possesses no more power to crush and damn fearless mortals who presume to think, than any of the other gods we have referred to. So we propose to speak of this special god with the same fairness and the same frankness as of any others. The mere fact of the inhabitants of Europe and America having adopted this particular god makes not the slightest difference with the truth or falsity of his theology—the truth or falsity of the claims it so arrogantly sets up.

As a dispassionate observer, we claim to be able to draw just comparisons between Jehovah, and Brahma, Fot and Ormuzd; or Osiris, Jupiter and Thor, and all the rest of those old magnates, without the slightest favor or partiality.

> We can see virtues where virtues are found,
> And discern vices where vices abound.

How, then, does Jehovah compare with the gods who were known before him? We fear an honest comparison of merits will not redound to his reputation. The characteristics attributed to him by those who claim to be his friends and admirers, are not such as to command the respect and esteem of an honest, unprejudiced jury.

We do not propose to get up a regular indictment against him, nor make out a "bill of particulars," but we cannot ignore the fickleness, cruelty, maliciousness, bloodthirstiness, ferocity, injustice and untruthfulness with which he is charged by those who proclaim themselves as his biographers by appointment extra-

ordinary—the same priestly class we have spoken of.

It will hardly be deemed necessary here to adduce proof of these specifications, but if it is called for, or if these facts are denied, they can easily be substantiated by an abundance of evidence from the book that this same god is said to have written with his own finger, or at least to have dictated.

What are the characteristics of the god under consideration? He styles himself the "god of battles," and he has been emphatically a god of blood. From the earliest accounts of him down to a few centuries, only, ago, we find that he has been inciting one nation against another nation, and commanding one race to assail and exterminate another race. How many times men, women and children were cruelly slaughtered by his express commands! Human blood, in thousands of instances, has been made to flow in rivers by his authority, or in keeping with his instructions. He is also said in a fit of anger, and for very trivial provocation, on several occasions to have himself, slain ten, twenty, forty, fifty, and even seventy thousands of the people he professed to regard with special favor. If such a deity is a "god of love and compassion," we say, most decidedly, let us have one of an opposite character.

It is painful to look at this picture, and we care not to dwell upon it. No sane person can deny the correctness of the statements made, if the Bible is to be taken as true. As cruel, as murderous, and as bloodthirsty as many of the other gods of superstition have shown themselves to be, and as much as they and their religions have done in the past to deluge the world in blood, this Jewish god and his followers have, in this respect, far transcended them all.

It is carefully estimated that in the name of the Christian religion alone, sixty millions of human beings have been made to bite the dust. Enough of the blood of men, women and children has been shed in the name of this religion to float all the navies and all the shipping of the world!

These sixty millions of hapless victims put to death in Christian wars, are exclusive of the great numbers of still more wretched human beings who have been tortured, racked, pullied, thumb-screwed, drawn and quartered, and burned at the stake, both with slow fires and fast fires, by that invention of all that is vile and demoniacal in human nature—"the holy Inquisition"—which, for over five hundred years, was industriously used both by day and by night, as an engine of relentless torture, cruelty and death, upon those who had the temerity to entertain an independent thought, or who dared to dissent from the theological dogmas to which holy (?) priests demanded they should bow.

Human language is inadequate to express with sufficient force the damnable wrongs which, in the name of "holiness," and the "love of God," were, during those five hundred years of more than midnight blackness, poured upon the defenseless heads of thousands of wretched and hopeless men and women.

If there is a God in heaven, whose watchful eye of kindness and love is ever upon his creatures mid all the dangers and vicissitudes of life; if there is a being of benevolence and sympathy who holds this world in the hollow of his hand, who has full cognizance of every act and event that takes place on the globe—if he orders and directs all things, and has power equal to his will, to hold the hand of cruelty

here, or stay the arm of oppression there—if this is so, we ask in the name of all that is good, benevolent, high and holy, why did not this kind Providence interfere once in that long five hundred years to suspend, for a short time, even, this infernal reign of terror? Where is the benefit of having a beneficent deity, if he never lifts a finger to stay oppression and wrong, and does nothing to succor the helpless and defenseless? The stereotyped reply to inquiries of this kind, that "God's ways are not as man's ways," and that he "takes his own good time to act," utterly fail to meet the case. A being who has the power to protect the defenseless, to relieve the needy and shield the oppressed, and refuses to do so, deserves the execration of every man and woman.

In addition to the sixty millions which were slain in Christian wars; in addition to the unknown thousands who have, at the secret hour of midnight, and at all other hours, been tortured to death in the Inquisition; in addition to the relentless warfare and persecutions that were persistently visited for hundreds of years upon the peaceful Albigenses, Waldenses, Vaudois, Piedmontese and Huguenots, as well as the unfortunate Moors of Spain; in addition to all these, the endless wars of the Jews, in which for hundreds of years they were almost constantly engaged, and in which most bloody butchery, hundreds of thousands, yes, millions, were needlessly put to death—putting all these together, affords some faint conception of the blood and life that have been poured out in the name of Jehovah and the religions instituted in his service.

As warlike as the Mohammedans were, as aggressive as other nations have been, the wars of the Jews and the Christians, which were emphatically the

wars of Jehovah, have surpassed them all. They have excelled the crimes of all other gods and their ignorant devotees, and have thrown far into the shade all other crimes of the world.

From this unpleasant retrospect, we are inevitably forced to the conclusion, that in counting up the thousands ot the gods of superstition and ignorance, Jehovah of the Jews and the Christians, most assuredly cannot be left out; for we have seen that in bloodshed; cruelty and crime, he outranks and overtops them all!

If it were possible to make a correct estimate of the cost in life and blood, treasure and happiness, of all the religious wars of the world which have been waged in the name of the gods (especially the god last mentioned), what would be the grand aggregate? No man can tell! But enough of life and strength and treasure have been worse than wasted in this way, to make a paradise of the whole earth; to fill every swamp on the face of the globe; to construct railroads in parallel lines within twenty-five miles each, and crossing at right angles, over each continent of the globe; to endow a school of science on every there miles square of the earth, and an industrial institution in every township of six miles square, where remunerative labor could be provided for all otherwise unable to procure it. All this and much more could be accomplished with the life and treasure that have been wickedly wasted in fighting for gods and and priests.

Think also of the mental agony, terror and forebodings, the fear of infuriated gods and vindictive devils, which have destroyed the peace and happiness

of millions of our race, who have been driven to melancholy, gloom and despair, by the groundless fears which priests have instilled into their superstitious minds, built up on these gods and devils. What a dreary waste of misery and woe to look back upon in the centuries of the past, and to view what the gods, the priests and religion have done for this world! In surveying the field of horror, the beholder is impelled to cry out in anguish: there is no God who rules on high, or all this iniquity would never have been allowed!

Our Christian friends readily admit the enormities of Pagan religions; and in fact *all* religions but their own, while for *it* they claim all the divinity, and all the excellence of which the mind can conceive. We deny the truth of this claim. We agree with them that Paganism was wrong; but insist they are equally wrong, for they are themselves perpetuating Pagan dogmas and errors. We have seen that the idea of Jesus being a person who had God for a father and a little Jew girl for a mother, was not an original one; it was borrowed from the heathen who taught it from five hundred to twelve hundred years before the advent of the Nazarene carpenter. The story of his life and adventures presents clear evidence of being copied from old legends. The tale of a crucifixion of a savior is by no means original with Christians. Mr. Kersey Graves, in an elaborate work, recently published in Boston, proves conclusively from history, that no less than sixteeen saviors were said to have been put to death on the cross, and all, hundreds of years prior to the time when the legend was attached to the story of Jesus. We will

append the names of these saviors, and the dates of their crucifixion:

I. CHRISTNA, of India,	1200	years,	B.C.
II. SAKIA, "	600	"	"
III. THAMMUZ, of Syria,	800	"	"
IV. WITOBA, of the Telingonese,	550	"	"
V. IAO, of Nepaul,	620	"	"
VI. HESUS, of the Celtic Druids,	834	"	"
VII. QUEXALCOTE, of Mexico,,	587	"	"
VIII. QUIRINUS, of Rome,	506	"	"
IX. PROMETHEUS, of Greece,	547	"	"
X. THULIS, of Egypt,	1700	"	"
XI. INDRA, of Thibet,	725	"	"
XII. ALCESTOS, of Greece,	600	"	"
XIII. ATYS, of Phrygia,	1170	"	"
XIV. CRITE, of CHALDEA,	1200	"	"
XV. BALI, of Orisa,	725	"	"
XVI. MITHRA, of Persia,	600	"	"

In addition to these, DEVATAT, of Siam, IXION, of Rome, APOLLONIUS, of Tyana in Cappadocia, are all reported in history as having died the death of the cross.

Thus we see in many nations, and long before the Christian Era, the belief in a crucified Savior had an existence. Then is it not easy to see whence the idea was derived?

It is singular how little of the Christian theology was original with those who founded it; and that their minds were not fertile enough to invent some new idea!

The Trinity, we have shown was of heathen origin.

The Holy-Ghost-idea, came from India.

The belief in a Devil, first existed in heathen lands.

Crucifixion, we have just seen was borrowed from Pagans.

The cross, as a symbol was used hundreds of years before Christianity, in India, Egypt, Thibet and other countries.

The personalized idea of "the word" or Logos, the creator of the world, as made use of by St. John, was borrowed from the East.

The confession and absolution of sin, were of heathen origin.

Baptism by water, originated in India and Persia.

The sacrament called *the Eucharist*, was derived from the Pagans.

Annointing with oil, was practiced in Pagan countries from time immemorial.

The worship of the Son of God, came from the heathen.

A virgin for the mother of God, was first recognized by Pagans.

Monasteries and monks, existed in Central Asia hundreds of years before the dawn of Christianity.

The doctrine of miracles came from the Pagans.

Immortality of the soul was taught by heathen philosophers long before the time of Jesus.

In short, if we take from Christianity all that was borrowed from Pagan nations and heathen religions, there is literally nothing left of it save its persecutions, wars and bloodshed, which they did not borrow and were able to originate themselves.

Now if these things are so, where is the good of our shutting our eyes to the fact? The clergy of our land and the most of their adherents, claim great virtue for simply believing their mythological rubbish, and that without question or cavil. This is wrong:

if their claims are unfounded, they should *not* be believed. If their system is made up of borrowed legends it is time the world knew it.

Christians, we repeat, readily condemn all gods but their own. We can see no more reason in believing in their gods than in the balance of the gods of superstition. We set them down in one class, and count them all a "bad lot."

The belief in these gods, and that they have revealed their will to a few favored individuals, who are commissioned to convey these godly secrets to the ignorant multitudes, who on pain of hell and damnation are compelled to receive them, has been of incalculable injury to the world. It was the origin of priestcraft and the multiform creeds which have been such a curse to mankind. It is quite time the world outgrew all this. It is time the race discarded all the gods of superstition, the belief in all the old systems and fables that have blinded and misled the world for forty centuries.

Some of the old fallacies may have answered for unprogressed minds in olden times, but now we require something better. Belief in the salvation of the race by blood, whether of rams, bullocks, he-goats or even of the son of a god, may have served a purpose in certain eras of the world, but we of to-day require something higher. We no longer can be benefited by a senseless belief in myths, superstitions and blind conjectures; we demand truth, science, and *positive knowledge*. These are the great needs of the world at this hour.

We must no longer look to bleeding gods and crucified saviors for aid. We need to understand the laws of the Universe, and of our being. We must be

our own saviors. We must develop and increase our intelligence, and throw away absurd creeds which darken the mind.

We shall find far more benefit in increasing our knowledge of all that has a real existence than in religion and its countless fallacies. Science and practical education are of more importance to the world even, than moral ethics. There has been little or no advance made in morals for thousands of years. In India, and Persia, and China, morals as pure, were taught four thousand years ago as the world has to-day.

The highest morality we can exercise is honestly to do our duty to our fellow-beings, and to ourselves. It is not in our power to benefit, or harm, any god, and we have no moral duty in that direction. We can do much in helping or injuring our fellow men, and equally we can do good or ill to ourselves. And herein lie our duty and our moral obligations. The attainment of positive and scientific knowledge will assist in discharging the duties of life, and in conferring good upon our brothers and sisters of humanity. Here is indicated the path we should pursue—to revere the Universe and its laws ; to respect science and its teachers, and to bid farewell forever to priests and the gods they have invented.

"But how about God ? If you discard the gods of superstition and include Jehovah in the number, what God have we left ?"

WE HAVE THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE.

"Define what we are to understand by the God of the Universe. Is he a person or being ?"

Not at all. A being or person can only occupy a certain location at a time. He cannot be every-where

at the same time. The deity which pervades the Universe, extending forever and forever, without limit or bound, is as much in the most distant world which the telescope has brought to our view—and millions of times further away—as on this small sphere. THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE FILLS IMMENSITY!

It is amusing, so to speak, to observe the various and absurd ideas which different persons entertain respecting God. Many imagine him much as the old German painters represented him—a grave-looking old man with grey beard and hair, with a stern countenance, seated upon a throne, dispensing blessings or curses, according to the mood he may chance to be in. They invest him with all the bodily organs that we have, the same impulses, passions, and emotions. They believed him liable to anger, pleasure, sorrow, love and hatred, the same as ourselves.

Although they locate him on his throne, or assign him to a single point somewhere in the sky, they affect to believe his vision extends not only to every part of this globe, but to the countless other worlds that float in space. Just how they are able to believe a person can be in thousands of worlds, trillions of miles apart, we cannot comprehend. Probably it is done with the same facility, and by the same process, by which they can believe that the one god is composed of three distinct persons, father, son and ghost, all of the same age and sex, the one being three and the three one. How they can reconcile this labyrinth of difficulty and contradiction is, to us, an enigma worse than a Chinese puzzle.

This class of believers probably can easily give their assent to the description of deity found in the Bible—that "smoke came out of his nostrils, and fire out of

his mouth so that coals were kindled by it ;" that "he dwelleth in temples not made with hands ;" that "he rides upon horses ;" that "he had horns coming out of his hands ;" that "he roareth from on high ;" that "he laughs in scorn ;" that "he cried and roared ;" that "he awakened like a man drunken with wine ;" that "the Lord is a man of war ;" that "in his anger he persecuted and slew without mercy ;" that "his fury is poured out like fire, and that the rocks are thrown down by him ;" that "his arrows shall be drunken with blood ;" that "he became angry and swore ;" that "he is angry with the wicked every day ;" that "the fire of his anger shall burn to the lowest hell ;" that "he burns with anger, his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire."

This is a Bible-picture of Jehovah ; let those admire it who can. We confess that, to our taste, it is not altogether lovely.

There are other persons, who, while they deprive God of a body, organs of sight, etc., still believe him a being omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; that he is present in all other worlds the same as in this, but still that he has a mind, will or purpose, and that he cogitates, plans and designs. They think he attends personally to the movements of all the spheres; that he guides the earth in its yearly circuit round the sun; that he causes it to revolve on its own axis; that he sends storm and tempest; that he attends to the entire animal and vegetable kingdoms, and to all other movements and operations in the Universe.

There is another class who look upon God as the totality of the unseen powers and forces which permeate the Universe—the source of all life and motion,

possessing no local habitation; having no organs, and consequently no thoughts and no intelligence.

To our mind this latter view is the most rational. We cannot conceive of a personality filling immensity. We cannot conceive of a deity who manipulates the Universe and is extraneous to it. The Universe embraces all that exists, including all the forms of Matter and the powers and forces that pertain to it It is self-existent and eternal, IT NEVER HAD A BEGINNING AND NEVER CAN HAVE AN END. Matter is both uncreatable and indestructible. It is equally impossible to reduce a particle of it in any form to non-existence, or to bring from non-existence a particle of it. The Universe is composed of particles or atoms. It could not have been made, it cannot be unmade. It may change forms continually; but it cannot go out of existence, as it never came into existence.

It is the opinion of learned philosophers, that the earth and the entire solar system once evolved from a nebulous condition, so highly attenuated that some cubic miles were required to constitute a grain of solid Matter. That through interminable ages, by gradual condensations and aggregations, spheres and suns and planets were formed and developed, until in the lapse of time the present state was reached, to remain, perhaps, through incomputable epochs, and then to relapse again into the nebulous condition. The Universe may have gone through this and similar processes an infinite number of times, and this may be forever repeated; but no *beginning* can be conceived of a time when there was nothing, and when the entire cosmos was produced from non-entity. It seems much easier to comprehend that the Universe always

existed and always must exist, than to imagine it all came from nothing and must again return to nothing.

To say that a fly created the eagle, which soars highest in the azure blue, that a mouse was the maker of the elephant, the largest beast that roams the Asiatic forests, or that a minnow designed the whale, the leviathan of the great deep, is quite as true, quite as sensible as to assert that Jehovah, the fickle and malicious tutelar god of the Jews—who confessed on a certain occasion that "he could not drive out the inhabitants of a valley, because they had chariots of iron;"—that this god of limited power who ruled one small nation, fashioned, designed and created from absolute nothing the vast, boundless Universe, filling immensity; whose height, depth, length and breadth is without beginning or end; upon whose waves of ether, float and roll millions and trillions of suns, systems and constellations of worlds, so numerous and vast, that all the numerals in existence would fail to express them; which for countless ages have rolled on in their trackless course through the ocean of space shedding their clear, persistent light for incomputable periods down the never ending vistas of immensity;—to say this was all *made* only six thousand years ago by a being of limited powers and knowledge—how preposterous, indeed! When will the sons of men drop such idle vagaries? When will they gain more exalted views of the boundless Universe of which our earth and our solar system are but infinitesimal parts?

The idea of a creation and a creator, is an outgrowth of the ignorance and superstition of which we have spoken. In the infancy of the race, man's mind was not developed and intelligent enough to comprehend

that the Universe could as easily be eternal as God, and that it needed a creator no more than God needed one. With their circumscribed views they supposed everything they saw in existence required a maker; but they seemed not to think that a God, so powerful as to make a Universe from nothing, also required a creator. By parity of reasoning it would appear, if the Universe needed a creator, God also would need one.

As scientific investigation has advanced in the world; as it has been found the Universe is governed by laws; as men have learned the heavenly bodies move in harmony with those laws; as they have found that the recurrence of eclipses can be calculated and foretold to a minute; that the earth revolves on its axis and in its course round the sun in obedience to the same unvarying laws; that summer and winter regularly succeed each other without supervision; that storms and tornadoes, earthquakes and volcanoes are not the spasmodic actions of an angry God, but the direct product of natural causes; that the tides of the ocean ebb and flow without extraneous assistance; that rains and sunshine, winds and calm, are not controlled by any being; that vegetable and animal life is produced and governed by laws; that health and disease depend solely upon causes and conditions; and in short that every operation in the Universe is regulated by universal laws, which are as eternal as the Universe itself—as this is understood, and it is comprehended that the Universe is self-existent and required no maker, it is perceived THERE IS NO NECESSITY FOR A GOD, AND THAT THERE IS NOTHING FOR A GOD TO DO. Everything and every part of the Universe, moves with more precision than the most perfect machine

man ever made, and no being is needed to superintend it.

It surely requires no God to make twice two to be four, nor to keep it so. Twice two ever did make four, and ever will. This is a simple proposition, it is true, but everything in Nature is equally simple, if equally well understood; and it illustrates all other propositions, laws and conditions which make up the laws of the Universe. They require no urging; they require no checking; they require no supervision.

Many think this view is an impious one, and that it detracts from the honor of the Deity. This is not the case; the real impiousness consists in denying to the glorious Universe the credit it is entitled to. It is immensily more perfect, more immutable, more competent to run itself, than any or all the gods of superstition combined.

The world has so long been schooled in the old theory that a god is necessary, back or behind, above or below the material world, to make it in the first place, and to keep it in the traces afterwards, that it is most difficult for men to divest themselves of the error. They cling to this god-idea, as a great necessity, even when they become convinced that a god is not needed to conduct any of the endless operations of Nature. Although they are unable to point to a single place in the vast Universe where a god for a moment is required; although they cannot name a single piece of workmanship that God ever performed; they think nevertheless, we must have a god to hold on to, and to trust to, in case the "breeching breaks," to prevent things from going to "eternal smash." [Applause.]

Some designate God "the soul of the world;" "the

spirit of the Universe;" or "the ghost of all existences;" and assign an undefinable character to him difficult to describe; but this soul, spirit or ghost, cannot possibly have an organization or location, and though it can hardly be supposed to have thought or intelligence, they still cling to the idea, and must have some substitute for the old gods of superstition which, as we have shown, have been palmed upon the world from the early ages of ignorance. But, little by little, this relic of antiquity is forced to give back, and take its departure from progressed minds, along with the belief in devils, sprites, witches and fairies. The Universe needs no *soul*, it requires no *spirit*, it has no use of a ghost; equally it needs no god. Indeed it were better to drop the use of all these appellations, in connection with the Universe. It is in itself *all in all*, and the use of these other terms tends to mislead the mind. The name *God* is fitted only to the superstitions of the past and is applicable to no portion of the Universe. Let men learn, then, to drop the use of the word. UNIVERSE is vastly better.

All the subtile powers and forces of Nature which exist, whether attraction, repulsion, gravitation, affinity, light, heat, electricity or magnetism—these and all others of the forces of Nature, whether known or unknown, are in the Universe and parts of it, as much as the crudest forms of Matter. They permeate the Universe through and through, and cannot be separated from it.

It was the great mistake of the earlier philosophers —we mean Kepler, Galileo, Newton and others of their times, that Matter in its native state is *dead*. The doctrine of "inertia" which was espoused for several centuries, and is not yet obsolete, is a huge

fallacy. Every atom of Matter in existence is charged with life, force and motion, and it is not within the range of possibility to divest it of these inherent qualities. There can be no such thing as dead Matter; there is no inertia.

The idea is entertained by many that there must be a grand central INTELLIGENCE in Nature, which is the fountain and source whence all human intelligence is drawn. We know, as we said on a former occasion, of no intelligence nor mind where there is no organization to produce it, any more than we know of sight without the optic nerves and organs of vision, or of hearing without the tympanum and organs of the ear, or of muscular strength without the muscles and connecting apparatus to produce it. Intellect, thought, or mind, is not a promiscuous substance floating through space ; it is not a primitive element, a separate entity, independent of the forces and material of the Universe, but is, as we said, the result of organization—an outgrowth of matter—a motion, so to speak, of an organ and its connected nervous system.

We find intellect existing in all grades and degrees from the lowest to the highest form, and in all varieties as regards quality and quantity, but nowhere without a suitable organization to give it existence. In the vegetable kingdom we perceive the lowest indications of intellect, though that there is not a measure of it in simple substances when brought into contact, as in the cases of acids and alkalies, metals and oxygen, hydrogen and oxygen, and an infinite number of similar chemical combinations, we will not pretend to say. That there *is* intelligence in the vegetable kingdom cannot be doubted. It is indicated in the general reaching towards light, as with the potato sprout

in a dark cellar in the Spring of the year. If a little sunlight steals through a hole or crevice, how the delicate shoot reaches towards it! How constantly many flowers keep their faces towards the sun. Who has not witnessed the tendrils of a vine reaching for a limb or cord, or something to cling to and support the growing plant? If there is a support within reach it will find it. This appears to be a low order of intelligence, but commensurate with the conditions calling it forth.

In the animal kingdom we find varying degrees of intelligence, but always in keeping with organs and conditions. An oyster has some intelligence, a fly more, an ant more, a honey-bee more, a hog still more, a dog still more, a horse still more, an elephant more still, and man more than all. He is truly said to be an epitome of all animal existences below him, and the highest expression of divinity in the Universe In these and numerous other gradations of intellect or mind, the difference arises from the varied organizations, from the quantity and quality of brain and the character of the nervous system, a part of the connecting apparatus for producing and conveying thought and sensation.

In man great diversity of intellect exists. If each individuality is a spark from a great central intellect, it would hardly be so; but when we realize the interminable differences in organizations, conditions, quality and quantity of brain, together with the ever-varying character of nervous systems, the reason for the great variety of intellects can be partially understood.

The production of intellect depends on several conditions. In the first place a healthy body is

most essential. A good brain, a good nervous system, a good stomach, a good digestive apparatus, circulation of good blood are all indispensable in the production of good mind. Proper food, air and water are of the highest importance in this intricate process, and without them mind cannot exist. As the fuel and water are to the engine; as hay and oats are to the muscular strength of the horse, so is meat, bread and potatoes to the intellect of man. The combustion of the fuel converts the water into steam, whose confined force acting upon the piston causes the engine to move rapidly, and convey with it hundreds of tons in weight. The digestion of the hay and oats imparts to the horse muscular strength sufficient to move bodies ten times his own weight, and what also of intellect he possesses; so the meat, bread and potatoes which man eats and assimilates impart to him the powers and forces he possesses, including the intellect or mind. Deprive the engine of fuel, and it must stop; deny the horse his hay and oats, and he cannot haul heavy loads, he must stop; withhold from man his necessary food and he soon becomes exhausted; starve him and he has no muscular strength and equally no mind; before the spark of life flickers out his mind is gone, he is an idiot or a maniac; he has no intellect.

It is well known the labors of the mind are as exhaustive as physical labor, and equally necessitate material food and repose.

Thus we see food produces mind in the same way it produces muscular strength, and that one is the product of matter and organization as really as the other, and that we must look for the best intellect where we find the best organizations and the best conditions.

The views here advanced upon the Deity and the mind, essentially materialistic, or Universe-alistic, as they are, do not militate against the belief in a future existence in spirit life. That belief is based on the theory that, in the economy of nature, while we are developing our physical bodies in this earthly stage of existence, we are also perfecting another finer body or counterpart of rare and subtile forms of matter, comprising all the organs and parts our cruder organizations do, and that at the dissolution of this coarser, rudimental body, the finer organization is liberated, and commences its independent existence; but is really composed of matter, and pertains and belongs to the Universe just as much as our coarser bodies do.

Our Spiritualistic friends believe our former companions who have departed from our sight are able to return to us, to see us and hold communion with us, by means of natural laws and forces.

Thousands of persons, and among them some of the most brilliant minds of the age, have been paying great attention to this subject, and have become fully satisfied that all human beings have a continued, conscious, individual existence. Men of Science have devoted years of patient, earnest investigation to this subject, and feel as thoroughly convinced that we have a spiritual existence as that we have a physical.

Our own personal opportunities for investigation in this direction, have not been extensive; but we are free to admit that we have received proofs of an intelligence, disconnected with physical bodies, which we cannot ignore; and until some more rational theory, explaining this class of phenomena is advanced, we are compelled to believe in a continued existence after death. The concurrent testimony of num-

erous personal friends of intelligence and honesty, of the proofs they have received of a similar character, demands our candid consideration, and we feel no disposition to pooh-pooh it away. On the other hand we hope it is true, and are glad if it is. The belief is a happy one, and greatly enlarges our estimate of the grandeur of the glorious Universe, of which we are all infinitesimal parts.

We by no means accept all the claims set forth by those styling themselves spiritual mediums. A large proportion—perhaps nineteen twentieths of them—are charlatans and frauds, wholly unworthy our confidence; but that among all this chaff there are many grains of the real wheat we fully believe.

Spiritualism is justly entitled to the credit of demonstrating to mankind, that they have a dual or continued existence after this rudimental life, as well as for great aid rendered in demolishing the errors of superstition; and despite all the shams and deceptions that have been connected with it, we must concede it great merit for what it has accomplished.

We would not discourage those from investigating the proofs of a future life and the various forms of spirit-phenomena, who feel an inclination to do so; but we believe a great waste of time, labor and treasure has been and is being made in that direction. Our motto is, ONE WORLD AT A TIME. While we are in this state of existence, our *duties* are here. Here is ample scope and need, for all our efforts; all our talents and all our aspirations. This is a good sort of world, but it is not near what it ought to be, or may be. Ignorance and superstition have so retarded the progress of the human race, that much needs to be done before it can reach the point of per-

fection and happiness possible for it. So let us not spend our time in running after mediums and pretenders; let us not strain our eyes in vainly trying to see and learn all about the future life. Let us occupy all our strength and attention with this life, doing all the good we can to ourselves and to those around us, and leave the mysteries of the other world till our duties in this are accomplished.

If it is demonstrated to a certainty, that spirits exist in spirit-land, it does not follow we should look to them for instruction or advice in the performance of our duties here. OUR REASON IS THE HIGHEST GUIDE and the highest authority we can possibly have, and it is wrong to supercede it by looking to invisible spirits for counsel and aid. Let us then, cultivate our reason; let us develop it to the highest extent possible, by scientific studies and investigations, and not resign our own judgment and individuality in preference to any person here or elsewhere.

A belief in a continued existence does not imply a belief in immortality. Immortality means an *endless* existence. That ours had one end—a beginning—is pretty clear. That it extends no farther back than the time we were begotten, is most reasonable. That our mentality partakes of the characteristics of our parents and ancestors, as fully as our bodies do, cannot be successively denied. The peculiar traits and mental similarities running in nations, tribes and families can have no other explanation. The theory of re-incarnation, or the eternal existence of mortals, as individuals, in the past and in the future, therefore appears untenable. Human beings have their beginning as individualities, when they are begotten, precisely as with the lower orders of animal life, and

vegetable life also. Having then, settled the fact that we had *one* end—a beginning—we are forced to the logical conclusion, that at some time in the future we must come to the other—the close of individual existence. We cannot conceive of anything in the Universe having a beginning, but what must also have an end. How far in the future the close of our individual existence may be, cannot be known, but we trust it may be thousands of years.

As we remarked, it is our present existence that demands our immediate and undivided attention. The needs of the race are great and urgent. Much has been done in the acquirement of scientific knowledge; but far more remains to be accomplished. Science is yet in its infancy. In Physiology, Hygiene, Psychology, Sociology, in short all the studies which make up *the science of life*, as well as in all the sciences not here named, the world has yet a great deal to learn. It is not enough that we have a few learned professors who understand these subjects, the masses must also understand them. If not all professors, we should be learned men and women in all that pertains to life, health, longevity and the best good of the race. Every man and woman should feel that they have a mission to perform—that it is within their power to make this world better for their having lived in it, and they should not be satisfied with doing anything short of their whole duty.

IGNORANCE IS THE PRIME EVIL—THE GREAT DEVIL OF THE WORLD; AND KNOWLEDGE—SCIENCE, IS THE TRUE SAVIOR.

The more we drive the former from the earth; the more we study and encourage the latter, the better and happier will be our lives. In this labor we shall

duly revere the true God of the Universe, and forever discard from our minds all belief in the gods of superstition. [Prolonged applause.]

The subject of the foregoing lecture was criticised and discussed as follows, the language used being necessarily much abridged, but the substance retained :

Mr. Herman Shook said when he joined the Liberal Club, he was prepared to hear subjects discussed with great freedom, but had hardly expected to hear a lecture so remarkable for boldness as the one just uttered. Notwithstanding what he had heard, he thought he should continue to believe in the religion of his fathers, and to revere the God Jehovah. He then diverged into a recital of Oriental fables as to the origin of the earth, but made no further reply to any portions of the lecture.

Mr. Foulke commended the major portion of the lecture, but could not agree with the latter part, where the possibility of ghosts was admitted. He thought it absurd to deny a ghost to the Universe, and then to allow the ghosts which Spiritualism claims. He argued at some length the fallacy of a belief in the existence of Spirits.

Mr. H. M. K. Wilcox was glad so radical a lecture could be delivered in this hall, without any offensive demonstrations of opposition being made. He regarded it as an ominous indication of the progress that is being made in this age. He could not agree with the positions taken in the lecture, and deemed there was abundance of proof of the existence of a God.

He said the lecturer was mistaken as to the length of time the Inquisition existed. Five hundred years were claimed, when in fact it was but little over three hundred, commencing in the year 1456 and ending near the close of the eighteenth century. He was not disposed to admit Socrates to be one of the noblest specimens of mankind that ever lived. It is well known he neglected his family and did not provide necessary food for them, and spent his time in idleness and drunkenness. He thought the lecturer in error about Prometheus. He was not crucified, but was lashed to a rock, where he perished. He also attempted to get off some witticisms as to the circulation of THE TRUTH SEEKER, and said, in the great shipwrecks that had taken place in the publications of the country within the past year, in which one thousand had failed, he had wondered where THE TRUTH SEEKER found a constituency; but now he thought he had discovered the secret, that it was in the other worlds.

MR. HENRY EVANS deprecated violent attacks on Christianity. He felt no alarm at its encroachments, and thought, despite the evils which had been connected with it, it had served a good purpose in the world. He did not believe we now had anything to fear from it, and doubted the propriety of demolishing it until something was furnished in the place of it. He said some unkind things about the assumptions of science, or what he regarded as such.

MR. STEPHEN PEARL ANDREWS said he had been much interested in what he had heard, and considered it was work in the right direction. He regarded the work of the Iconoclast as essential; much of the errors and mistakes of the past are to to be cleared away, and he was grateful that so radical and

iconoclastic a lecture could be complacently listened to. It showed we were progressing in the right direction. He considered that every shade of opinion had an equal right to be heard from the platform and from the press. As a substitute for the term God he preferred the appellation of "The Most High" as being more expressive and appropriate in every respect.

MR. D. E. DE LARA, while he conceded learning and ability in the lecture, could not agree in the conclusions arrived at by the lecturer. He thought in the Universe there were ample proofs of design and mechanism, and instanced the human eye, and thought it and its uses showed strong proofs of design. He could not give up the idea of a Creator, and asked the lecturer how he accounted for the proofs of design we see in nature.

MR. A. H. H. DAWSON made a few remarks upon the crimes of Christian nations. He said in no nations of the world was there so much of stealing, robbery and dishonesty as in Christian nations. He defied any one to point out another people upon the face of the globe which exhibited so much of rascality, dishonesty and crime as our own American people. He cited our national government and our city government as being strong exemplifications of dishonesty and iniquity. In no heathen nation had there been such a vast amount of immorality and villainy.

VICE-PRESIDENT W. J. ORMSBY made a few remarks, rather complimentary of the lecture, and he deemed it one that merited a favorable reception from the Liberal Club.

D. M. BENNETT, in closing the discussion, replied to the criticisms that had been made, substantially as follows:

He could not deny the first speaker the right of adhering to the religion of his fathers, or in believing in whichever god he pleased. It was a right every Arab and every Hottentot might equally claim, and were equally entitled to; but that argument does not evince a spirit of progress in knowledge, science or religion. In the path of progress of the human race it has often found it necessary to depart from the teachings of the fathers, and will doubtless still find it necessary to do so. The fathers once taught that the earth was flat and immoveable, and that it was the center and the chief part of the Universe. We have learned to think very differently upon this subject; despite what the fathers once taught, we now believe the world is round, that it flies through space at the rate of 68,000 miles an hour, and that it is only an extremely minute portion of the Universe. We may still find the fathers were equally wrong on the subject of gods and devils. We have not yet discovered all the truths that exist, and the errors of our fathers, in many respects, still hang over us.

In reply to Mr. Foulke, he said it was not his object to make proselytes to Spiritualism, but had merely mentioned the possibility of a continued existence as being cognate to the main subject of the lecture, and as not being antagonistic to the unchangeable laws of the Universe. He did not regard himself as enough of a Spiritualist to do him any harm. He accorded to every one the right of entertaining views and convictions in keeping with the proofs they received. He did not think any person ought to believe in anything of which they had no proof, that every person ought to be candid enough to acknowledge proof when it was presented. The right of founding

his belief upon evidence, he claimed for himself, and freely accorded it to others. He had not himself acceded to a belief in a continued existence, until he had received proofs of it which he could not ignore, and he hoped no reasonable person would be so bigoted as to reject proofs when clearly and unmistakably presented.

He denied the correctness of Mr. Wilcox's assertion as to the origin of the Inquisition, and showed it was founded by St. Dominic in 1216, and was ratified by Pope Honorius III. Its first general operations were directed against the unfortunate Albigenses, and in this crusade Simon, Count de Montfort took a very active part, and by the Pope was appointed Inquisitor in Languedoc. The Inquisition was adopted by the Count of Thoulouse in 1229, and confided to the Dominicans by Pope Gregory IX. in 1233. In 1251 Pope Innocent IV. established it in the whole of Italy, with the exception of Naples. Thus Mr. Wilcox was clearly in the wrong. He repelled the slanderous imputation that Socrates was a drunkard, and denied that history sustained such a charge. True, he spent much of his time in teaching morals and wisdom to the young men of Athens, and in holding profound discussions with his disciples and pupils, in which enunciations the world has never had more illustrious examples of sound wisdom and philosophy. It is difficult, at all events, to see why his life was not as commendable as a similar course pursued by him of Galilee, who lived four hundred and fifty years later, and who has been lauded to the skies for spending his time in teaching, and who was not only regarded as a friend to publicans and sinners, but by a miracle, manufactured wine for the people to drink after they were already drunk.

As to the story of Prometheus, statements are contradictory. One rendition is that he was fastened to a rock, with arms and legs extended, and another that he was confined to a cross. In the drama of Æschylus, which was played upon the stage of Athens five hundred years before the Christian era, he was represented as being crucified upon a cross of wood, and as a man-god, died to atone for the sins of the world.

As to THE TRUTH SEEKER, while its circulation was not as extensive as he could wish, and though many other papers had gone by the board, he had been enabled thus far to pay his bills. He had not been aware of having any patronage from other worlds; but if Mr. Wilcox in his visit to the moon or other aerial bodies, could obtain any subscribers for the paper, he would be glad to receive them. The terms are, *cash in advance.*

In reply to Mr. De Lara, he said that the appearance of design did not necessarily prove it. He conceived there had been an absolute necessity for every event that had ever occurred, and that under the circumstances events have necessarily, always had to be just as they were, and under existing conditions could not be otherwise. Every result that ever occurred had a natural and sufficient cause to produce it, and no planning or designing was necessary. If the Universe, or any parts of it argued a design, how much would the designer, who must be superior to the thing designed, himself require a greater designer; and where would we stop?

Mr. Bennett had no objection to the substitute suggested by Mr. Andrews, "The Most High," for the old name God. It was a convenient term, and every

person in its use would be free to elevate his deity just to the point he pleased, and in accordance with his best views and convictions.

He dissented from Mr. Evans' criticism relative to Christianity. He considered it had been a fraud and an imposition upon the race, and that it had cost the world, in blood and treasures more than all else besides; that it was to-day the strongest power on earth and the most to be dreaded. Is there nothing connected with it to excite our apprehensions? Has it no superstitions of pernicious effects? When we pass by the numerous Catholic churches and cathedrals in this city, and see the superstitious multitudes that rush in to worship the Virgin and her infant God, and before doing so are very careful to dip their fingers in "holy water" and cross themselves most devoutly—is there nothing in this to excite our pity and alarm our fears? Is it not terrible to see these dupes so completely under the control of designing priests? We consider our country among the most intelligent in Christendom; this city is its metropolis, and is counted the most intellectual city of the world; but here in our very midst, in this Nineteenth Century, are scores of thousands of ignorant men and women who are paying priests to pardon their sins, and to secure for them peace with God; they are buying of priests charms and relics to keep away demons, sickness and misfortunes. Many of these dupes give half their earnings to priests, and are under abject mental bondage. It is estimated it costs the United States $200,000,000 yearly, to support Christianity, and all for no practical utility. Is there, then, indeed, no evil about Christianity that we ought to remove? And shall we keep our hands quiet and our tongues still until we get

some substitute for it? We want no other myth or error to set up in its place. The truths which science is developing is all we need as a substitute. When disease and contagion are abroad in our land, we seek to remove them as speedily as possible, that health may take their place; we look for no substitute save natural, healthy conditions. If there is a putrifying carcass lying in one of our public squares, polluting the atmosphere and scattering the seeds of death, should it not be removed as speedily as possible; or should we first look around for something as a "substitute" to put in its place, saying, "we have so long been used to this smell, it will not do to remove this putrid carcass unless we can get something to put in its place that will afford us a similar odor?" Knowledge is the best substitute for ignorance and error; health is the best substitute for contagion and disease. Because the world has thus far worshiped false gods, it does not follow, other false ones should be made to take their places before the first shall be discarded. The religion of humanity is the best religion—that which prompts us to acts of kindness to our fellow-beings, and incites us to do all in our power to benefit our race.

The lecturer closed by relating an anecdote illustrating the effects of religion on various nationalites, which he had recently heard from a friend, Mr. Turner. Mr. T. and his sons a few years ago were engaged in running a pork-packing establishment in this city, and for the trimmings and cheap meat they had hundreds of customers among the poor and laboring classes. Of this number probably three hundred were Irish and two hundred Italians, but all zealous Christians and believers in the "Holy Virgin." There

were also a fair proportion of French, German Portuguese, English and Americans. Among the rest were some fifty Chinamen, who are heathen, having no religion, no pious ceremonies, and no God. How did the two classes compare? It constantly required a policeman and one or two others to keep the Christians from stealing the meat and going off without paying for what they had taken, and they were continually finding fault and scolding about what they purchased, while from the Chinamen they in no case had the slightest trouble. They entered quietly, and looking over the meat, pointed to a piece they wanted, to ascertain its price, and if suited, counted out the money, without saying a word to reduce the price. After being served they invariably raised their hats to the salesman and to the cashier, politely bidding them "good day," and peacefully departed. Mr. T. and his sons watched attentively, and they never caught one of these heathens trying in the slightest degree to cheat or defraud, while with their Christian customers they had constant trouble, and in spite of all they could do, they were daily wronged by the "followers of the cross."

These contrasts between the parties named are found to exist similarly in other lines of business; in their native countries, as well as in the country of their adoption, the heathens are honest, upright, peaceful, "child-like and bland," while their opponents, the Christians, are dishonest, quarrelsome, rude, coarse, thievish and turbulent. Which are to be preferred, and which of the two religions are productive of the best morals and the most gentlemanly conduct?

MOVING THE ARK.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the numerous Bible stories of marvelous events, the interesting narrative of David removing the Ark of God from Kirjath-jearim unto his own city, should not be omitted. It was, doubtless, a commendable thing for David to do, after the numerous successes that had so recently attended his battles with his competitor Saul, and it is creditable to him that in the hour of his triumph, he did not forget the residence of his God, and that he provided for it.

This ark—totally unlike the ark Noah constructed, both in size and purpose, has a history, which we will briefly examine. It was manufactured by direct command of God to Moses while the Israelites were journeying from Egypt to the land of Canaan. On a certain occasion, when God had commanded that every man in the whole congregation should bring him a free-will offering, either of gold, silver, brass, blue, purple or scarlet linen, goat's hair, ram's skins dyed red, badger's skins, shittim wood, oil, spices, onyx-stones, etc., he gave explicit directions for the

construction of the ark. It was to be made of shittim wood, two and a half cubits long, (about four feet,) a cubit and a half wide, and the same in depth (some thirty inches, our measure.) It was to be overlaid with gold inside and out, and a crown of gold upon it. A ring of gold was also to be attached to each corner, through which staves of shittim wood also overlaid with gold, should be introduced, with which to carry it. A mercy-seat of pure gold, and of the same length as the ark, was to be placed upon it, with two golden angels called cherubims, one at each end, stretching forth their wings and covering the mercy-seat and the ark therewith. In the ark was to be kept the testimony or covenant of God to the people, and it was to be his special residence, and from above it, he was to hold communication with Moses.

It was some little time before the ark was constructed according to these directions, and not until after Moses went up on Mount Sinai to assist at engraving the ten commandments, after Aaron had made the golden calf to worship, after Moses in a fit of anger thereat broke all the commandments at once, and had to return to the Mount and repeat the process of getting up another set. After all this, one Bezaleel, the son of Uri, who, by the by, must have been a good mechanic, got up the ark, and the mercy-seat, and the staves, and the cherubims, with their wings spread according to stipulations, as well as a great deal of other work, including the tabernacle candlesticks, lamps, vessels, bowls, altar, pots, shovels, basons, flesh-hooks, fire-pans, laver, court-hangings, curtains, etc., etc. It would seem to require a manufactory, with good facilities, to turn out such a variety of workmanship,

and a little wonder might well be excited how a wandering people, in a wilderness, could afford the necessary facilities for such a diversity of mechanical operations.

This ark was kept in the tabernacle, which was a kind of tent, and the Israelites kept it with them in all their wanderings and through all their wars, but we do not hear much more of it till near the close of the life of Joshua, when at Shiloh, he divided the country among the twelve tribes, by lot; whether by throwing dice or by drawing straws, or picking numbers out of a hat, or by playing "seven up," or some other game of chance, we are not told, but that deciding by lot means by a game of chance of some kind, cannot be denied. Well, here the tabernacle and the ark was duly set up, and remained there for a considerable period.

After the time of Samuel, on a certain occasion, when the Israelites were badly whipped by the Philistines at Eben-ezer, when four thousand were slain and left upon the field; the defeat seemed to be a matter of surprise to the Israelites, and they enquired among themselves what it could mean. They said: "Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh so that it may save us from our enemies." Accordingly Hophni and Phineas, sons of Eli, were sent for the ark, and they conveyed it into the camp. Upon its arrival, the Israelites shouted loudly and made such an outcry, that it alarmed the Philistines who heard it, and when they learned that their enemies had brought the ark of their God and would then have his assistance, they nerved themselves to the contest, and said to each other, "Be strong and quit yourselves like men," thus relying upon their

own strength and prowess in opposition to the God of the Jews. In the contest that followed the Israelites were more unsuccessful than before the arrival of their God; this time thirty thousand of their footmen alone, were slain. Hophni and Phineas were also put to death, and the ark was captured by the Philistines.

A sad fatality seemed connected with the ark; when a man of the tribe of Benjamin, with rent clothes, hastened to Eli, [the aged father of the two unfortunate men who had charge of the ark,] who had arrived at the advanced age of ninety-eight years, as soon as he heard the intelligence of the capture of the ark and the death of his sons, he fell over, broke his neck and immediately died. The death could not be called premature, but was, nevertheless, sad. His daughter-in-law, the wife of one of the sons, as soon as she heard the news, was taken with premature labor and brought forth a child, which she named Ichabod, and she died. Thus the ark was the cause of a very unusual commotion, in that family, and, so far as they were concerned, it had better have remained at Shiloh.

The Philistines took the captured ark to Ashdod and into the temple or house of their God, Dagon, and set it up beside him, and it seemed to be a disturbing element there. This god, Dagon, had always before behaved himself with propriety, but the first night after the ark was brought into his presence, he fell with his face to the earth before the ark and laid there till his loving worshipers picked him up in the morning and sat him right again in his place. On the second night this thing was repeated, with this addition, on the second morning Dagon was found with

the palms of both hands cut off, and only the stumps were left. This extraordinary occurrence greatly alarmed the priests of Dagon, and they doubtless felt as though they had in that ark an elephant upon their hands. They feared greatly that the invisible god in the ark was more powerful than their god, which they had before regarded as possessing supreme power.

It is said, also, the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them and smote them with emerods in their secret parts. These were probably very bad things to be smitten with, and when the people of Ashdod saw all this, they felt that the invisible god in the ark was unfriendly to them, thus to afflict them, that they said, "the ark must go." It was taken to Gath; but that city, in consequence of the presence of the ark and the mysterious power within it, was equally unfortunate. A very great destruction came upon the city, and all the men, both great and small, had emerods in their secret parts. It is no wonder those people decided the god in the box was not kind to them, and that they immediately removed it to Ekron, where consternation and great destruction was also the immediate result. Great numbers were destroyed, and the balance smitten with emerods.

It is not singular, we say, that the Philistines became greatly disturbed at the presence of that mysterious ark, and that they wished it removed from their coasts, for they became convinced that the god within it would not become acclimated to their country or be friendly to them. It was suggested that they make some golden mice and some golden emerods and place in the ark as a trespass offering to appease its god for

what they had done in bringing the ark to their cities, and then to send it away. They did so. The manner of sending it was singular. They fastened two new milch cows to a new cart and placed the ark upon it; their calves were shut up at home, whereupon the cows, without a driver, immediately started for Beth-shemesh, a portion of the territory of the Israelites, and when they arrived there, the men of the place were busy in the harvest fields securing their wheat, but when they heard the lowing of the cows, and saw the ark coming, they rejoiced and expressed their joy by cutting the wood of the cart for fuel, and offering the two cows as a burnt offering to the god of the ark. It may be judged that this effort on their part did not put God in a particularly good humor, for in consequence of some one opening the ark and looking in, he smote just fifty thousand and seventy men on the spot. A pretty good number of men, truly, to be gathered in a harvest field; but we are only relating the account, and will not stop to question it.

It is not singular that the people lamented the return of their god; they had got along very well without him, and over fifty thousand lives to pay on the first day of his return, was a heavy price indeed. The people who were left—for the fifty thousand slain did not embrace all who had assembled—sent the ark to Kirjath-jearim; it was taken to the house of Abinadab, and his son Eleazar was sanctified as priest to attend to it. In the absence of the god of the ark among the Phillistines, the Israelites seem to have adopted Baalim, Ashtaroth and other gods, and Samuel persuaded them to discard these and return to their old-time god who had been brought back to

them. He took a sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt-offering "wholly unto the Lord," which seems to have restored the former amicable relations, for in the battle with the Phillistines which immediately followed, the latter were badly used up, and for a long t me they remained quietly within their own borders.

As we were saying, it was from this place that David decided to remove the ark to his own city, and that, after wading through the blood of his own people, which he had so freely shed in his way to the throne, it may have been a very praiseworthy measure of his, to remove the aforesaid ark.

He gathered together thirty thousand of his chosen men for the purpose, a number quite sufficient, it would seem, to move a box four feet long. The ark was placed upon a new cart, hauled by cattle, which were driven by the sons of Abinadab. David and all his companions played before the Lord on all manner of musical instruments while the ark moved along.

On the way a sad event occurred, which proved how dangerous a matter it was, even with the best intentions, for a man to touch the ark. As the cart passed over rough ground, the gait of the cattle shook the ark badly, and a man by the name of Uzzah fearing the safety of the ark was endangered, probably with the best motives in the world, put his hand upon the ark to steady it and to keep it from falling from the cart. For this piece of temerity the unfortunate man suffered severely; "the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, and God smote him for his error, and there he died by the ark of God."

This alarming event frightened David so greatly that he felt it would be unsafe to have so dangerous a piece of furniture near him, and he caused it to be conveyed

to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months. After he learned that the household of Obed-edom prospered greatly, he deemed it would be safe to convey the ark to his own city. This he had done with great gladness, and on the way he sacrificed oxen and fatlings, and he danced before the ark with all his might, midst shouting and the sound of trumpets. All this, it is to be supposed, placed the Lord in very good humor, for no one was killed on this occasion, which was the first instance for a long time, when the ark had been moved without one or many deaths resulting from it.

David had the ark placed in the tabernacle which he had pitched, and he sacrificed more animals and made peace-offerings and served bread and flesh and a flagon of wine to each one in the multitude. Good feeling and joy seemed to possess all, save his wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, who looked out of the window and witnessed David dancing so vigorously before the ark in an uncovered condition that she reproved him for his shameless, undignified conduct in the presence of so many hand-maids and servants. David, however, justified himself and said he would do worse than that next time. For thus speaking unto David, it is said "Michal had no child unto the day of her death;" but in a subsequent chapter it is stated she had five children. How both of these statements can be true, or which is true and which is false, we will not decide, but will leave our clerical friends to explain it.

After David had deposited the ark and its god in a tent, while he himself occupied a house, it struck him as not being just the thing, and he proposed to the prophet Nathan to build a house for the Lord. Nath-

an approved of the plan, and said the Lord did also; and here was the origin of the temple afterwards built at Jerusalem, a special place for the Lord to dwell in. David, however, although said to be after God's own heart, was so much a man of blood, having caused the death of untold thousands, that he was deemed unfit to build the temple, and it was reserved for his son and successor, Solomon, who was not so bloodthirsty and warlike, but who had a wonderful penchant for the opposite sex, and who drank bullock's blood to recuperate his overtaxed animal powers and functions. He had, it will be remembered, seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines; and for him it was reserved to build a holy house to the Lord God.

The main lesson to be learned from this story is, to see the crude, imperfect and improbable notions entertained about God in those primitive times; that the God of the Universe could be confined in a box four by two and a half feet square; that he could be moved from place to place by means of cows and oxen; that he flew into a fit of anger upon very trifling provocations and killed fifty thousand and more at a time; that he could be pleased with the blood of animals and the smell of their roasting flesh, the noise and sound of horns, trumpets, shouting, etc., and with boisterous dancing and jumping. It is easy to see these ideas of Deity were very crude and unprogressed. Now, it is not supposed the God of the Universe can be confined in a box of the dimensions named, or that it is in the power of men and cattle to move him around and set him up here or there. It is scarcely believed now that he gets angry and slays thousands of men for unintended mistakes, and hence

394

it can be seen how unreliable and absurd many of those old Bible stories are, and how illy fitted they are to the needs of humanity in the present age of the world.

A Word of Advice.

READER: If you wish a live, fearless, outspoken, Radical sheet, subscribe for

THE TRUTH SEEKER,

a weekly Journal of Free Thought and Reform. Does not every true Liberal feel interested in the success of this enterprise? And can he have fully discharged his duty, who does not aid in its support?

Published at $2.00 per year, including postage, by

D. M. BENNETT,

335 Broadway, N. Y.

BENNETT'S
Prayer to the Devil.

Oh, Lucifer, thou Son of the Morning, Prince of the Air; thou Sulphureous Majesty, known also as Beelzebub, Apollyon, Satan, the Power of Darkness, the Evil One, and Monarch of the nether regions; we would address ourselves to thee. We know not whence thou art nor whither thou goest; and in an under-tone we would say, we seriously doubt thy existence as a personage; but having heard much of thee, we would approach thee respectfully. As much as is thought to be understood of thee, as many as think they have been annoyed by thy presence, little or nothing is absolutely known of thee. Thou art said to have a frightful visage, with horns on thy head, a cloven foot and a long barbed tail, but there is not a being alive who hath ever seen thee, and the word of those who, in former times claimed to have had a glimpse of thy person, is not worthy of credit.

He who hath told us most of thee, giving us thy early history and exploits, was John, surnamed Milton. He described thy tall, majestic form and thy imposing presence. He narrated most eloquently, and in sublime verse, thy prowess and valor in thy

terrible contest with the King of Heaven, and his superior forces commanded by his Lieutenant-General Michael, in which grand contest rocks and mountains and thunderbolts were fiercely hurled, and luckily no one killed. If it was thy unfortunate fate to be beaten in that bloodless conflict and to lose a subordinate position in heaven, thou hast ever since been the victor, and hast ruled solely, in hell, and without successful opposition on earth. Howbeit, John was a poet and dwelt so completely in an imaginary world, that his descriptions of thee must be viewed in that light, though they have been the basis of the theological views concerning thee.

The class of men called priests have much to say of thee, and claim to have derived great information concerning thee from an old book written by unknown persons and which itself sadly needs confirmation.

From all that we can learn of thee, by this record, and what its expounders say of thee, thou hast been greatly slandered and maligned. Thou art called a liar, the father of liars, the source of all evil and the cause of all the trouble and unhappiness the world has known. We believe this unjust and unfounded. In that "snake story," when thou persuadest our first mother to eat a fine apple thy antagonist had created, it is held thou didst act very badly, but we cannot see wherein; the fruit did open her eyes and the eyes of her husband, to know good and evil, and when thou saidst to her that in the day they ate thereof, they should not surely die, thou toldest no lie, but the truth, for they lived nine hundred years thereafter. If it was wrong for thee to induce them to partake of such beautiful fruit that was within their reach, was

it not more wrong to *create* such a dangerous temptation and place it in their sight?

In that friendly tilt thou hadst with thy competitor, the Son, otherwise known as the carpenter of Nazareth, and who said that he and the father were one, when thou carriedest him to the top of a mountain so exceedingly high, that thou couldst show him all the kingdoms of the earth, including not only those on the side towards thee, but those on the opposite side as well;* and when thou takedst him to the pinnacle of the temple to show him the surrounding country, thou at least proved thy superior physical power, and if thou offeredest him all the kingdoms of the earth for a certain consideration, tho' thy enemies would disparage thee for this, and say thou didst not own them, it would seem thou didst, by the right of conquest; and that at all events, thou hadst the right to execute a quit-claim deed if thou chosest.

That little affair with Job, when thou afflictedst him so sadly and covered him with boils, was really a little shabby, and, most assuredly, an act no gentlemanly devil would want to be guilty of, but it seems it was a special arrangement which thou enteredst into with thy antagonist, as a matter of experiment, and if thou wert culpable, he certainly was no less so, for it was he that first named Job to thee. In fact it was a discreditable piece of business for both thee and him.

Though the little experiment here alluded to was not worthy a great being, justice impels us to say that for many centuries thereafter thou wast not known to

---

* QUERY.—How tall a mountain would it require in our country, to enable a man from the top of it to get a good view of Egypt, India, China and Australia?

be guilty of any reprehensible act, whilst thy opponent was guilty of much cruel, merciless conduct, causing the death of hundreds of thousands of his creatures and inciting numerous wars, in which millions of his own peculiar nation and other nations were killed. While he has thus caused the death of untold numbers of human beings, while he acknowledged himself the cause of the evil that exists, while he admits that he caused the prophets to lie and be false; notwithstanding all the charges of iniquity and crime that has been brought against thee, and all the opprobrium that has been cast upon thy name, no priest can point to a single instance where thou hast told a falsehood, where thou hast been guilty of theft, or where thou hast ever caused the death of a single human being. In this respect thou art immensely superior to thy antagonist, who is said, daily, hourly and momentarily to cause the death of old and young, and who has in so many instances led his chosen people to falsehood, theft, robbery and murder.

As much as thou hast been slandered and abused by those who esteem themselves godly, thou hast never co-habited with a young maiden; thou hast never committed adultery with the older sisters; thou hast never seduced an unprotected female; thou hast not indulged in drunkenness, nor made wine for those already drunk; thou hast not yielded to anger; thou hast not sought to deprive others of their dues; thou hast not descended to back-biting or slander, and, so far as we are able to learn, thou hast always conducted thyself like a gentleman, and in all these regards hast acquitted thyself far more creditably than thy antagonist or his priests.

Of a truth, thou hast proved thyself a fast friend

to the human race. Thou hast fostered science and education; thou hast promoted inventions and improvements of all kinds tending to increase the knowledge and happiness of man. It was thee, it was asserted, who first taught Copernicus and Galileo that the earth is round; that it revolves every twenty-four hours, and makes its yearly journey round the sun. It was thee who taught them of the countless worlds which float in [illegible]ce. It is well thou didst this, for it seems thy [illegible]ied th[illegible]ist nor his Son knew aught of it; or if they did, th[illegible]used [illegible]igned not to say a word of it in their book or in the[illegible]nat teachings; and though the Church came near taking the lives of those two worthies for telling the world what thou taughtest them, we are left to conclude thou didst protect and befriend them.

It was thee who was said to have taught Faust and Guttenberg the art of all arts—printing—and one or both were cast into prison for their supposed intercourse with thee in the matter; and since that day pious men of the Church have repeatedly denounced the printing press as the greatest of evils—an invention directly from thee, and bound ultimately by the dissemination of light and knowledge, to overthrow the Church of God.

The great inventions of the application of steam, the telegraph, railroads, steamboats, lightning-rods, friction-matches and the thousands of other useful inventions, have been denounced by thy enemies as thy work, and as having been incited by thee. The pious Presbyterians of Scotland even claimed fanning-mills to be an invention of thine, and denounced those who employed them for cleaning their oats and rye with using "the Devil's wind," and thought they

ought to be cursed of heaven therefor. Is it not a little curious that thine enemies, after denouncing all these inventions named, with many others, as thy productions, after man has used them and found great utility in them, and elevated the race thereby, should turn and try to claim them as the result of *their* religion, and to endeavor to establish its proof by by their existence?

Few among thy enemies are men of science, and they advocate nothing which tends to impair their old system of theology. They still insist that it is thou who leads the scientific, learned men to discover truths in Nature which disprove the idle tales of ignorance found in that old book. Humboldt, Lyell, Darwin, Huxley, Wallace, Farraday, Tyndall, Draper, and all that class of scholars, are denounced by the Church as thy servants—led and incited by thee; and the brave advocates of mental liberty and freedom of opinion, regardless of priestcraft and false theology, are still more denounced and maligned. They are called children of thine own begetting; so that by the showing of priests, ignorance, superstition, mental slavery and fogyism belong to their side, while science, learning, invention, innovation, enterprise, mental freedom, and human progression, belong to thy kingdom, and are the measures of thy founding. We pray, then, that thy influence may increase in the world, while that of thy antagonist is bound to decrease.

In the matter of prowess and generalship much injustice is intentionally done thee. Thy antagonist is called all-mighty, and is said to be so powerful that naught can stand before him. But according to the confessions of thy enemies this is untrue. In every

contest since thy expulsion from Paradise thou hast beaten. In the game for the great stake which thou and thy opponent have been playing for—mankind—thou hast held the trumps and won by far the larger share—say twenty to his one. He had greatly the advantage to begin with. He made everything just to suit himself, and had the fixing of conditions precisely as he wished, in peopling the world, when thou steppedest in, and with little effort or bluster, quickly swept the board. If he drowned the race of man to get rid of thy influence; if he caused nation after nation to be butchered and exterminated to get an advantage over thee; if he even sent his beloved son to be sacrificed and cruelly to be put to death to make a point on thee, and gain human souls to himself, it all seemed of no avail, for thou worsted him in every contest, thou hast come off victorious in every encounter and drawest still, a retinue of followers after thee, immensely more numerous than the sparse number of bigots and old fogies that he induces to follow him.

In view of these facts the injustice which has been done thee by thy enemies is most apparent. If thy antagonist is called the "mighty one" thou shouldst be called the "most mighty one." If, in memory of what he has done in the world, he should be called kind and benevolent, how much more shouldst thou be styled great, magnanimous, powerful and supergood! How wrong that the firm, including the father, the son, and the other individual, each holding a third interest, should exclude the greatest and best of the four, simply because of his excessive modesty, and on whom so much depends, even in the system that has been devised in their interest. Without thee what would their whole stock in trade be worth?

Without thee what would become of the millions of priests that have cried aloud in their name? Without thee their whole system, their grand cathedrals, their elegant churches, their sonorous organs, their modest chapels, their monasteries, their nunneries, their seminaries, their colleges, their rites and ceremonies, their countless millions in tithes and exactions; and even the source of all their terror and fears would have no existence. In view of all this, we exclaim, how shabbily hast thou been treated! Thou hast been kicked out of the firm which should have contained a quartette, with thyself not farther back than second. It might, with propriety have read, Father, Devil, Son & Ghost.

Another great injury we feel has been done thee, by the circulation of the report that thou art engaged in a never-ending contract, by the firm aforesaid, to do their dirty work for them—to keep up, without cessation, the sulphureous fires in the nether regions to a white heat, and therein with pitchforks and other cruel implements of torture, thee and thy sub-devils to forever pitch and punch, to the latest moments of eternity, ninety-nine one-hundredths of the entire unfortunate human race! We cannot believe this of thee. It is all a priestly lie. Nothing in thy character, so far as known, justifies the horrible conclusion that thou wouldst ever engage in an employment so repulsive, and so execrable. As we said, thou hast ever shown thyself a friend to the human race, and hast rarely done an unkind act to any individual, and we feel assured that thou wouldst never be so base, so heartless, so inconceivably cruel, as to torture thus, countless millions of poor, weak, ignorant, helpless mortals through endless ages, for the trifling offenses of a

short earthly life, and just to please thy old antagonists—the firm of Father, Son & Co. We believe, Uncle Nicholas, if they wanted thee to do this work for them, that thou wouldst immediately spurn the idea, and bid them do it themselves.

No, no; imperious Lucifer, we can believe nothing of this cruelty of thee; the idea is too monstrous to attach to any being, god or demon, much less to a character so amiable as thou hast thus far shown thyself to be. The good and benevolent, the free, the wise, the intelligent, the learned, the scientific, and the lovers of liberty, all follow in thy wake. As thou hast heretofore treated them well, thou doubtless will continue to do so. We much prefer to train in thy band with such men as Socrates, Plato, Copernicus, Galileo, Spinoza, Goethe, Schiller, Shakespeare, Byron, Humboldt, Volney, Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, and all such men, than to be numbered with the priests, the zealots, the hypocrites, the bigots and the murderers, which make up the other crowd. We fear not to trust ourselves with thee and thy companions.

We would not deceive thee in the least; we have, as we said, grave doubts of thy existence as a person, but believe in thee just as firmly as we do in the existence of thy antagonist. Both stand on an equality in this respect. We regard you both as figments of the brains of ignorant superstitious nations, which intelligence and reason will ultimately drive from the earth.

Prince Lucifer, thou spirit of the air; we say then, speed the day—hasten on the time when truth and knowledge will rule supreme in all the earth; when popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, pastors and elders

can be dispensed with; when the ignorance they have fastened on the race will give way; when all men can exclaim in truth, "we have knowledge, we have light, we are our own priests, we walk in Nature's lovely path, and none can make us afraid." AMEN.

———: o :———

A Word of Advice.

READER: If you wish a live, fearless, outspoken Radical sheet, subscribe for

THE TRUTH SEEKER,

a weekly Journal of Free Thought and Reform. Published at two dollars per year, including postage, by

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

The Truth Seeker Tracts.

If you want terse, trenchant reading matter, to act as "Eye-openers," in doing "Missionary Work," convenient to hand to neighbors, friends and all enquiring persons, send for a supply of these valuable little evangels of truth.

They range in price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount is made to those purchasing in quantities. They are so low in price, that thousands of generous-hearted persons can afford to buy them for gratuitous distribution. Too many of them cannot be spread broadcast over our land. Sent, post-paid, by mail.

Published by D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

Our Ecclesiastical Gentry.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

By an extract from a recent English paper, we notice a clergyman there, of the Established Church has brought a suit against a non-conformist minister to prevent him from using the affix *Rev.* before his name. The offending clergyman had lost a daughter, and on her tomb-stone he wished to state that she was the daughter of the Rev. ——. To prevent his doing this, the motion named was made by the other clergyman. His position was, that it is the clergymen of the Established Church only, that have the legal right to affix *Rev.* to their names, and that the other party being the "independent," or a dissenter, had no right to use it.

This was a small piece of business, truly, but evinces the spirit of the Christian clergy. The Catholics, in the first place, hold that all without the pale of their Church are in error, and have not the genuine article of Christianity. The Church of England next follows on in the same path; it, only, has the true faith. In its wake follow the hundreds of dissenting creeds which make up the Protestant denomi-

nations. They all claim that their special church has the real truth, and that all others are more or less in error. Every one virtually says, "I am right, the others are wrong."

The fact is, they are all wrong; and many intelligent people are steadily coming to this conclusion. They are upholding a system of faith composed of, and built upon the superstitions of ancient heathen religions, which can be easily shown.

The term *Reverend* is a title of honor, which priests for many centuries have appropriated to themselves upon a false basis. It really means that they are "men of God," that they are in his special service, that they know more about the mind, will and mysteries of God than other men do; that they can approach nearer to his throne, and can wield more influence with him than other men, and that, therefore, they should be revered by the masses, looked up to with much veneration and be paid large salaries for living in idleness, with the exception of their weekly appeals to "the throne of grace." But "even this shall pass away." The world is fast finding out these Reverends are an expensive, a tyrannical, an aristocratic and a useless class. That they are giving their hearers and supporters no positive knowledge, but content themselves with dealing out the old superstitions that have existed for thousands of years. They tell the same stories and make the same appeals made centuries ago, and the world is tiring of it. Men no longer want old fables and antiquated errors, but *knowledge*, *science* and TRUTH.

For the immense sums the priesthood cost the world, they make very meagre returns, and large numbers are coming to this conclusion. This country

alone, spends some two hundred millions of dollars annually for supporting its one hundred and twenty thousand clergymen and churches. Christendom, entire, probably spends not less than five hundred millions of dollars in the same way. And what is received in return? False theology, superstitious dogmas, darkening fables and serious impediments to the true progress of the race. Many are getting to understand that priests know no more about God; no more about the Unseen; no more about the Devil; no more about the future, than other men, and are gradually becoming convinced that they are not receiving from this privileged class the kind of teaching they require, and are entitled to. That clergymen are no better and no more moral than other men, proofs are piling up, day by day. Many of them find their way into our State prisons, while larger numbers are constantly proving themselves guilty of crimes that honorable men heartily despise.

The world needs teachers, and always will, but they must be teachers of truth; teachers that can impart facts the world ought to know—the laws of nature, the great needs of the race—the truths of science and the path to usefulness and happiness. In a few more decades the Reverends can be dispensed with, but the teachers of science will ever be duly appreciated and rewarded.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the extraordinary characters of the Bible, and the extraordinary stories of great feats and performances, we cannot, of course, forget Elijah the Tishbite, a "mighty prophet of the Lord." The recital of what he did and what befell him taxes our credulity to the utmost; and if we cannot believe it all to be strictly true, we hope our Christian friends will not blame us. The story, at best, only purports to narrate certain events that transpired some three thousand years ago, in a certain country in Asia, and as it was extremely common in that age of the world for writers of all countries to blend very much fable and fiction with their facts, we are compelled to take these marvelous statements with a great deal of allowance; and such parts as are wholly at variance with the known laws of nature, we are very safe in setting aside. It does not follow that we must believe the whole of a story simply because it is told in some manuscript or book. We have too many proofs that, in thousands of cases, falsehoods

have been palmed off as truth ; and this was attempted in olden times as much as now.

Elijah, it seems, was born and raised in Gilead. This was probably nothing to his discredit, as, for ought we know, Gilead was a very good country to grow up in. He is introduced to us as making a visit to Ahab, king of Israel, and prophesied there would be no rain or dew for these years. The account does not state how far this remarkable drouth should extend, whether just over that particular country or all adjoining countries ; but as no limit is given, we can only suppose it meant the entire earth. "*These years*" is slightly indefinite, also, as to time ; it might mean two, or it might mean twenty. Less than two it could not be, to be *years*, and as the third year of the drouth is subsequently spoken of, it is usually admitted that there was no rain or dew for three years.

This account, to look at it squarely, is a most improbable one, and utterly opposed to nature's laws. The moisture from the surface of the earth is constantly being evaporated and carried into the air. The air can hold up a certain quantity and no more. When its capacity is filled, and when by the low temperature of the upper air the vapor is condensed again to water, in the form of dew or rain, it is bound to descend to the earth. This is inevitable. The moisture that rises in one section may be borne off by the winds in a vapory state for hundreds of miles, perhaps, but it must in a short time descend. We see, then, it is utterly impossible that there should be no rain or dew for three years, or two years. The atmosphere could not sustain the hundredth part of the moisture that would rise from the earth in that time.

Think, also, for a moment, the results that would follow on the earth, or in any portion of the earth's surface, were there to be no rain nor dew upon it for three years. The entire surface of the ground would become "as dry as an ash heap" several feet in depth; not a plant nor a tree could live, and it would everywhere become as barren of vegetable life, and consequently of animal life too, as the vast desert of Sahara. Every spring, every rill, every creek and every river would become dry, and the lakes and the ocean itself would be greatly exhausted. Constant evaporation, with no returns of moisture, would produce this precise result. Not a human being and not an animal could survive such a drouth.

The story is so entirely impossible that no person under the control of reason and good sense can believe it for a moment. It is certainly a fabrication entire, or a great exaggeration; and both being so easy of accomplishment, it can well be understood how much more probable it is that it is one or the other than that such an impossible event as is here narrated could have occurred.

To return to our story. After the Tishbite had delivered this remarkable prediction to Ahab, God told him to "get hence," and contrary to Greeley's advice to the young men to "go West," God advised this man to *go East* and hide himself by the brook Cherith, where he could get plenty of water to drink, and assured him he had arranged with the ravens to supply him regularly morning and evening with flesh and with bread. The necessity of hiding himself is not apparent unless it was to afford God an opportunity of showing him with what ease he could furnish him with his daily food. In view, however, of the thou-

sands of deserving and unfortunate individuals, shipwrecked on the ocean, cast away on desolate islands, lost in the wilderness, separated from the haunts of men, imprisoned under various circumstances, and through poverty, destitution and want—in cities and in country—yes, in view of the hundreds of thousands of hapless mortals who, under all these conditions and many others, have been left to perish, starve and die without a thing being done by God in their behalf, or a single raven being sent to their relief, it looks as though God is partial and does not treat all alike. That ravens, too, should be the medium of relief, is a little out of the natural course of things. Ravens, rooks and crows are not usually regarded as friends to man, their services by the ancients were assigned to demons and evil spirits. They are certainly mischievous and troublesome in various ways. If, however, in this case they were angels of mercy, they were *black* angels.

In a short time the brook Cherith dried up, and it is to be inferred the ravens became remiss in their duties, for Elijah got very hungry, and was forced to change his boarding house. It may be supposed that God and the ravens together could still have managed to procure water and bread for the prophet, but God, of course, knew best how to carry on his own work. He now directed the Tishbite to Zarephath, where he had engaged a widow woman to attend to him. That was a good change. Commend us always, to a widow woman for a companion and to prepare our daily food, rather than ravens and crows. We would sooner pay double price for a home with a widow, and have the benefit of her ministrations, than to hide by the side of a brook, run dry, with

none but treacherous ravens to take care of us. Doubtless the good man wished he had been directed to the widow at first.

He found the widow, however, in very straitened circumstances, and when the prophet importuned her to prepare him something to eat, she protested in the name of heaven that all the food she had in the world was a handful of meal and a small quantity of oil in a cruse—a slight stock of provisions, truly, to carry three persons through a three year's drouth and famine. Elijah, not having had a "square meal" for some time, was eloquent and ardent, and he bade her not to fear, but to make him a cake at once. She said she was just about gathering two sticks to make a little fire to cook the small amount of meal left, for herself and son, and then, she had made up her mind she and he would lay down and die. Elijah was a good persuader; upon the strength of his promise that her barrel of meal should not waste away, and that the cruse of oil should not be exhausted until the dry weather was over, he induced her to get him a dinner. And here comes in the best part of the story; though she and he did eat together many days, and many months, the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail. There was nothing bad about that; in short, it was an excellent arrangement.

It probably was not much trouble for God to do that little favor, and it was so much better that they should have enough to eat than to be left to starve. The main thing to be regretted is that the practice has not been more common. How many poor widows have famished with hunger day after day, and have seen their little babes waste away and die for the want

of food, and not a spoonful of meal nor a drop of oil was provided for them. There are thousands this moment in this great city, and in all other great cities, and all over the world, that know not where to get their supper this night, and will throw themselves upon their wretched beds without a mouthful in their stomachs. No ravens will minister to them—no meal or oil will be provided for them. It seems, truly, that this good God, which the priests tell us of, is partial; he treats some, so much better than others. He is very apt to neglect the widows and their little babes, (who, of all others, should have his special care,) and leave them to famish, while his priests and prophets are well provided for. Even the widow woman in this story, would doubtless have been left to starve, and nothing would have been done for her, had not Elijah came along as he did. It squints very much of partiality, say what you will. In these days God seems to provide very few meals for anybody. If they do not supply themselves, or some kind-hearted people do not give it to them, they have to go without. It does little good to call upon God for meat and bread.

Elijah and the widow got along well together, till a little mishap befell the boy. Either from eating too much, or some other cause, his breath went out of him, and the widow blamed Elijah about it and upbraided him so much, that he took the lad in an upper room (probably it was a three-story house), and "brought him to." It is usually supposed that the boy had died, but this is a mistake. If he were *dead* he would have remained so in spite of any ceremonies Elijah could have performed over him. When once a human being, or an animal, is *dead*; when

their life has fully passed out of them, that is the end of it; no more living again for them; and whenever you hear a story about some one being raised from the dead, don't believe a word of it—the thing is utterly impossible. You might as well talk of raising men from logs and rocks. A body that is absolutely *dead* must remain so and must hasten to decay, its elements soon to be absorbed in other organizations. Whatever class of men, or whatever book teaches to the contrary of this, teaches what is false. The claim of raising the dead, was in former times set up by many pretenders and frauds, but in every case it was untrue; the thing was never done. "Baron Munchausen," "The Arabian Nights," or "Gulliver's Travels" make statements as wonderful, but nothing farther from the truth.

It was afterwards said of Joseph's son—or rather his wife's son—that he raised one from the dead, but the remarks just made, apply to his case. It is altogether easier for the assertion to be false than to be true.

In the case of the widow's son, however, the narrative does not say that he died, but that there was no breath left in him. That might easily be. The breath has gone out of many a one, and they lived years afterwards. In catalepsy, swooning, syncope and trance, the breath often leaves the body, sometimes for days, and yet the patient is not dead, and after a time revives again. This might have been the case with the widow's son; respiration might have been temporarily suspended, and Elijah, by his manipulations, might have revived him. If this was the case, it was nothing wonderful, and no stranger than frequently occurs, and hardly deserves a place in the "word of God."

In the third year of the drouth the Lord sent Elijah unto Ahab, again to make another prophecy and to predict rain upon the earth. It was the very thing that Ahab and all others wanted, for the famine was very sore in the land. The king and his governor, Obadiah, were out looking in every direction over the whole country for water to save the king's mules and cattle. Elijah met Obadiah, and wished him to convey intelligence to the king that he was there. Obadiah was a good man, and had preserved a hundred prophets in caves, daily sending them food and drink. It is presumable that he was, at least, as trustworthy in carrying food as the ravens had been. He objected to taking that message to Ahab, fearing the latter would put him to death, inasmuch as Ahab had sought in every nation and kingdom, to find Elijah, and had sworn every nation that they knew not where the prophet was. Ahab probably deemed Elijah the cause of the drouth, and wished to put him to death, but being snugly ensconced with the widow, living on meal and oil, the king was not able to find him. This searching every nation and kingdom must have been a heavy contract for Ahab, if there were as many nations in existence then, as now. Obadiah feared that if he told the king Elijah had returned, and then Elijah should secrete himself again, and Ahab be unable to find him, that he, Obadiah, would be slain. Elijah, however, by a promise, overcame Obadiah's objections, and he conveyed the desired message to the king, and a meeting between Ahab and Elijah was effected.

The king upbraided the prophet for causing all the trouble that had occurred, whereupon the prophet told him it was all his own fault, in consequence of his

going after the false god, Baalim, and this was the reason given why there had been no rain upon the earth for three years, and in consequence of which men, beasts and vegetation had suffered so severely—a bit of jealousy on the part of the good God of the Jews, that was all.

It was arranged, however, between the prophet and the king, that the matter should be tested and the power of the two gods thoroughly proved, that it might be known who was God and who was not. Elijah proposed that the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal whom Jezebel was daily feeding at her table, should meet him at Mount Carmel and match their god against his. This was done. Altars were erected, bullocks prepared and laid upon them ready for sacrifice, but no fire put under. Whichever god was able to cause fire upon his respective altar should be regarded as the real God. The four hundred and fifty priests of Baal called upon their god from morn till noon to manifest himself, but he failed to answer their wish, whereupon Elijah mocked them and told them to cry louder, that perhaps their god was talking or pursuing, or on a journey, or possibly asleep and required awaking. Then they cried louder, and even cut themselves with knives and lancets, and let their blood flow freely upon the ground, but all of no avail; neither their cries, continued the whole day, nor the shedding of blood answered the purpose. [*Query.* When the God of the Jews and Christians fails to answer the thousands of prayers offered unto him, which is the rule, would there be anything amiss, after the illustrious example of Elijah, for their opponents to mock them and ridicule them, and say their god must be talking, journeying or asleep?]

Elijah constructed an altar of twelve stones—(a holy number)—upon which he placed wood and a bullock, but no fire. He ordered four barrels of water to be poured upon the altar, which was done; then he said, "do it the second time," and it was done; then he said, "do it the third time," and the third time four barrels of water were thus poured upon the altar. The question naturally arises, when there had been no rain for three years, and when the king and his governor had themselves been compelled to search the whole country over for water, where it could be found in such quantities as to uselessly throw away twelve barrels; but questions are scarcely in order, we must take the story as it is. Suffice it to say, at the proper moment Elijah called upon his God to let himself be known, when the fire from the Lord fell upon the altar, burned up the sacrifice, and even licked up the twelve barrels of water. Upon this astonishing performance, the people fell upon their faces and had no further doubts which was *the* God. Then the good man, Elijah, took the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal down to the brook Kishon (it seems this brook had not gone dry) and there put them all to death. Who can doubt Elijah being a man of God after this wholesale slaughter? The query might arise what those four hundred and fifty prophets were doing while Elijah, single-handed, put them all to death? Possibly his God assisted him; it would be much in keeping with the killing he did on other occasions. Again, if they were as sincere in their allegiance as Elijah was—and their cutting and gashing themselves would seem to prove they were—was it not rather severe and un godlike to put them to death for it?

The production of fire in the midst of the water

that was poured so freely upon the altar, has been attempted to be accounted for by the possibility of the prophet having some potassium and placing it upon the altar, as it is well known that that mineral, in its native state, readily takes fire while floating upon water, and burns with great brilliance and persistency. Others have suggested phosphorus, which takes fire spontaneously at a certain temperature, but we do not believe he knew enough about chemistry to understand the nature of either potassium or phosphorus. It is altogether more probable the whole story is a fabrication, written by, no one knows who, and is wholly unworthy of credence. If there had been no rain nor dew upon the earth for the space of three years, as we remarked, there could be no vegetable or animal life left, and consequently no bullocks, no water, no priests, no Ahab and no Elijah. If the trench that the prophet dug around the altar "held water," the story will not.

The best part of that remarkable day's work on the part of Elijah was the fine rain he produced at the close of the day, thus ending the three years' drouth. He went upon the top of Mount Carmel and cast himself upon the ground, placed his face between his knees and kept his servant watching for the appearance of a cloud in the horizon. What occult powers he employed to produce the clouds and the rain is not known, and the secret is lost to the world, but at length the rain came and the earth was greatly refreshed.

It is difficult to see what had been gained by the "long dry spell," and the intense suffering it must have caused, except it was the chance of making that fire test and slaying the four hundred and fifty proph-

ets of Baal; and it would seem that could have been brought about at a far less cost.

If this story is true, Elijah must have been about the smartest man that ever lived. What he did in the evening of this one day—burning up a bullock and twelve barrels of water without fire, killing four hundred and fifty men, and then to produce a first-class rain, is more than any man that lives could do in a week. But this story will bear discounting very extensively.

After Elijah had put to death the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, Ahab returned and informed his wife, Jezebel, what the good man had done, and as the murdered men were her friends, she naturally was much offended, and she sent word to the Tishbite that she would have his life within twenty-four hours. This alarmed the prophet greatly, and he fled for his life, evidently having more confidence in Jezebel's enmity than in his God's protection.

He went a day's journey into the wilderness, and in a gloomy state of mind took a seat under a juniper tree, and "even wished he were dead." He asked the Lord to take his life; but instead of dying, he took a nap, from which he was awakened by the touch of an angel, who invited him to partake of a repast provided for him of cake, freshly baked, and a cruse of water. This was not brought by ravens, but by angels of another color. The prophet ate heartily and laid down again, doubtless wearied with his day's walk. After this sleep, the angel prepared another repast, to which he invited the prophet. That must have been a hearty, refreshing meal, for, upon the strength of it, Elijah walked forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb. This great feat of pedestrianism

surpasses anything the world has known in that line. It leaves Weston and others far in the shade. They have walked six days and nights consecutively by stopping three or four hours each day for refreshments and sleep; but this Tishbite man kept it up forty days and forty nights—and all upon the strength of that one meal. Not knowing the distance to Horeb, we cannot say how that walk was for speed, but in point of long continuance without food or rest, it is most astonishing, and taxes our utmost credulity.

If God had special need for Elijah at Horeb, it would have been kind in him to have transported him thither in a more pleasant manner than by his making such a long continued and wearisome effort. If he had sent around his carriage, in which he afterwards transported his servant to heaven, it would have saved the old man many weary days and nights.

Elijah must have been greatly in fear of Queen Jezebel to thus hasten away from her. Why did he not go back to the widow where he lived in such safe seclusion, and where he had been so well treated? It certainly would have been preferable to such a tiresome walk of forty days and nights without food or sleep.

On arriving at Horeb, the prophet took up his abode in a cave, and singularly enough, God came by in a still, small voice and asked him what he was doing there? The prophet answered by asserting the zeal he had felt for God, and that he had fled from those who sought his life; whereupon God commanded him to go and anoint Hazael, king of Syria, and Jehu, king of Israel, and to look up Elisha, the son of Shaphat, and anoint him to be prophet in his

his own place. Elijah left to perform this mission. He found Elisha plowing with twelve yoke of oxen—a pretty good "plow-team," at all events, and one that ought to have turned a good furrow. Elisha seemed to enter very readily upon his new mission, after slaying two of the oxen, boiling them with the harness and plows, and gave the flesh to the people to eat. This done, he followed Elijah to learn to be a prophet.

After King Ahab had been slain at Ramoth-Gilead, in consequence of taking the word of four hundred lying prophets which God sent to deceive him, that he might be slain, and his son Ahaziah had succeeded him, it so happened that the son fell through some lattice work and injured himself considerably and was obliged to go to bed. Wishing to know the result of the injury, and whether it would terminate in death, he saw fit to send messengers to consult Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, relative to the matter. This seems to have aroused God's jealousy, and he sent Elijah to intercept the messengers, and ask them if there was no God in Israel of whom they could enquire. The Tishbite told the messengers that the king should not recover, and they returned back to their master, who enquired of them why they had returned. They told him about meeting Elijah, and what he had said. The king then sent a captain and fifty men to go to Elijah and make further enquiries, and to bring him to the king. They found the prophet on the top of a hill, and the captain spoke very respectfully to him, calling him "man of God," and saying the king wished to see him. Elijah's amiable reply to this was: "If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume thee

and thy fifty," and immediately the fire descended and consumed them. The king sent another captain with fifty more men, and they met the same fate; Elijah called down fire from heaven and consumed them.

In thus burning to death these one hundred and two men for merely asking the prophet to come down, was a punishment which in severity was out of all proportion to the offense. If the king erred, the men surely were not at fault, and it was a hard fortune that they should be burned to death for rendering simple obedience to the command of their king. Divine justice, however, according to many parts of the Bible, is so different from our highest conceptions of human justice, that we are often shocked at its unmerited severity, as in this case.

The king, being still solicitous, sent the third captain with fifty men, and this captain fell upon his knees before Elijah and implored him to be merciful and not slay them with fire as he had the two other companies who had visited him, and begged him to go and see the king. An angel just at that moment spoke a low word to the prophet, and told him to go down and see the king, and be not afraid, and he went. Had he done this sooner, the lives of one hundred men might have been saved. Elijah, after all, gave the king very little satisfaction, and told him that in consequence of his presuming to send to Baal-zebub, he should not recover, and he soon died.

It now appears that the good prophet had done so much to please his God, that the latter had decided to take him up into heaven unto himself in a most peculiar manner. We are left to suppose the killing of four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the burn-

ing of two captains and one hundred men had rendered him a special favorite with God for which he should be rewarded in a remarkable way. Elijah and Elisha started together from Gilgal, and the former being aware his time had about come, seemed to wish to get away from the latter, and tried at a number of places to induce him to tarry and let him go on by himself; but Elisha stuck to him like a brother, and swore he would not leave him. They went first to Bethel, when Elijah said God had sent him to Jericho, then they went to Jericho, from which place Elijah said the Lord had sent him to Jordan.

When they arrived at that river, Elijah took his mantle and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that the two went over on dry land. This was truly a great feat to perform, and one all the prophets, priests, bishops and popes now in the world combined, could not perform. It is so unnatural for the waters of a river to pile up like a wall on either side, and so unusual for the bed of a river in a few minutes to become dry ground, so men could walk over dry shod, that it is very difficult for us to believe this was done in the case under consideration. It is entirely opposed to the laws of nature; water is ever quick to seek its level, and will not stand up like a wall unless it is frozen, neither will the beds of rivers, which abound in soft deposits of mud—could the water be removed—suddenly become dry, firm ground.

It would seem the waters of the river Jordan had almost become accustomed to being parted and piled up like a wall. They parted that way for Joshua and his army; in this case for Elijah, and on a subsequent occasion for Elisha. They may have got used to it,

but if they are keeping it up to this day, the world has no account of it. We know that the waters of our rivers will not perform in this way, though they be smitten with all the mantles, cloaks, coats and pants in Chatham street. If the power to divide rivers could have been conveyed to posterity, and the secret transmitted to us of modern times, of what immense utility it might have been to the world in the movement of armies and in the common business of life. What numbers of ferries, bridges and pontoons it would have saved; but somehow these wonderful feats were all performed a *long time ago*, and the secret has been lost, or God has not so much leisure time to attend to them as formerly, or has less inclination to exhibit his skill in that direction, and people have been compelled to use ferries and bridges to cross the streams.

After they had crossed over the river, dry shod, and were walking along, chatting together, a chariot of fire and horses of fire came in between them and carried Elijah up to heaven. The account is slightly confused, and says he went up in a chariot of fire, and also that he went up in a whirlwind. We don't see how it could be both ways. If it was a chariot and horses of fire, it was not a whirlwind, and if it was the latter, it was not a chariot of fire. He could not well go horseback and on foot at the same time.

But take it all in all, this is one of the most remarkable events that ever occurred, and Elijah was one of the most remarkable men that ever lived. He was probably the only man that ever existed who, without God's help, or with it, could prevent moisture falling to the earth from the air above, in the form of rain and dew for the space of three years. He was

perhaps the only man who could produce rain at will. He is the only one who has increased a handful of meal, and a few spoonfuls of oil, so as to furnish food for three persons for nearly three years. He was one of the very few who have raised the dead. In the killing business, he was a prodigy; there may have been individuals who have personally killed more than five hundred and fifty men, but the number of such has been very few. In pedestrianism and abstinence from food and sleep, he surpasses the world; in parting rivers with a mantel, very few have equaled him. In fireworks, he was pre-eminent over all who have ever lived. No other man has been able to call down fire at pleasure, and burn oxen, men, stones, dust, and even water. Could he have lived in this age of the world, he might have made an immense fortune as "Fire King." Such feats as he performed would be hailed with great applause in all quarters of the globe.

His last feat, of riding up into the ethereal blue—we know not how many hundred miles—in a chariot of fire, and with horses of fire, far transcends all his other performances. Of the countless billions of beings who have trod this earth, and who, when the cares and duties of life were over, have died from old age, disease, accident or violence, and the elements composing their bodies have decomposed and returned to the fountains whence they came, he is the only one who has been conveyed in his crude material body in a chariot to the regions of ether far above the earth. When the extreme rarity of the upper air is considered; that human beings cannot derive from it enough of oxygen to sustain life, that being in it for a short time only, deprives a person of muscular and physical

power; that the pressure of our atmosphere (fifteen pounds to the square inch), being chiefly removed, the tendency of the blood-vessels, arteries and veins is to be ruptured, and for blood to burst from the mouth and nose, so in that way, if no other, life would thus soon become extinct in the thin air above us;—when we remember, too, the intense frigidity of the ether above the earth—estimated by scientists to be over four hundred degrees below zero—in which a human being could not exist a minute; when all these facts are before us, the great improbability of this crowning feat of Elijah is strongly presented to the mind.

Jesus himself could not possibly have believed this story of Elijah's going up to heaven in a chariot, for, in the interview which he granted to Nicodemus, he expressly declared to that dignitary, that "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man" (John iii: 13). Now one of two things must be true: that this story about Elijah going up to heaven is all a mistake, or Jesus uttered a falsehood, and we will leave it for our Christian friends to decide which it is. Such discrepancies and contradictions in the book called the "word of God" are by no means unusual. Large numbers of them can be pointed out. By a passage in 2d Chronicles, xxi: 12, it would seem, also, that it was untrue that Elijah went up to heaven at the time here narrated, or, if he did, that he came back again, for it says he sent a writing to Jehoram, the son of Jehosaphat, king of Judah, and this could not have been true till seven years after the death of Ahaziah. We confess that we are unable to satisfactorily explain this disagreement in Bible history, unless upon

the basis that it is a book of great inaccuracy, and cannot be relied upon.

The most reasonable conclusion we can arrive at, is that the entire story is a fiction, written by some unknown person, who knew nothing of the laws and forces of nature, and who was ignorant of the truth that everything in the Universe is governed by unerring and unchangeable laws, but who supposed them to be controlled by the notions and whims of a fickle Providence.

Bible reverers of course think these events were special miracles, and were performed to carry on God's work, and to effect great good in the world. In this case, however, it is very difficult to see where any special good was accomplished by the impossible things Elijah was said to have performed. Ahab and his Queen Jezebel, were not converted; they continued to be ungodly while they lived, the worship of Baal was continued, the people did not materially change their course of life. Succeeding kings which ruled over Israel and Judah, continued to do wickedly and to die in their sins; the people were no better, and the efforts and performances attributed to Elijah seem to have produced no permanent good results, and thus the outlay of such miraculous power afforded no adequate returns.

In all this business this truth is indisputable. In most cases where the laws of nature were set aside, and natural impossibilities were said to be performed, it was in the age of ignorance and superstition; and as knowledge and education spread in the world, and as the truths of science illumine the minds of men, such impossibilities as were ascribed to Elijah no longer take place, nor are they believed by intelligent people.

CHRISTIANITY A BORROWED SYSTEM.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

To convince the candid examiner that the Christian religion is made up from religious systems which existed many centuries prior to it; that it had not a divine origin; that it was not a dispensation from heaven, and that it was not only man-made and of human origin, but that in every essential particular it is a mere plagiarism, a reconstruction from the dogmas and superstitions of older heathen nations—no more nor less than a revised variety of paganism—it is only necessary to study the pages of history bearing upon the subject.

I. We find, as we have shown in previous articles, that the fundamental belief in the ministration of the Son of God and of a crucified Savior offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, was old in many nations at the dawn of the Christian era. The world has had not less than two score of Saviors, one half of whom were said to have been crucified, and Jesus

was the last of the number. It cannot be consistently claimed he was the original Son of God, the original Savior, the original sacrifice and atonement which was offered up for the salvation of the world, when so large a number of Saviors and Redeemers preceded him, some three hundred, some five hundred, and some twelve hundred years before his time.

II. We find that all the doctrines, dogmas, practices, ordinances, sacraments, ceremonies and observances of the Christian Church, were taught, impressed and enjoined by various pagan teachers centuries before Christianity existed. This being the case, how can its devotees, with any degree of truth, or a semblance of consistency, claim theirs to be the only original Simon-pure religion ever vouchsafed from God to man? Can it be possible, their God or his Son in devising a grand plan of salvation by which the world were to be saved from endless torments, found it necessary to make up a "patch-work" system, taking a little here, borrowing a little there from old pagan errors and superstitions that had existed centuries before? Is it true, that a God of infinite knowledge, power and wisdom could not originate a system of his own, and not be compelled to take the silly inventions and absurdities of ignorant and unprogressed men?

III. We find, too, that the teachings and inculcations of Jesus, which his followers deem so grand, so sublime, so transcendantly beautiful and godlike—his moral maxims, which have been pronounced wholly unequalled in the world, as well as other moral maxims equally as good, were uttered and enjoined by other reformers and other demigods hundreds of years prior to his time.

These facts can be easily proved, and they conclusively show that Christianity is not an original system, that it had not a divine origin, but that its features and doctrines were all devised by men and borrowed or stolen from the heathen; its boasted claims of originality and heavenly parentage, are completely overthrown and scattered to the winds.

Limited space will not permit our now adducing proofs at length of these propositions. We can merely name the Saviors the world has had at different times, give some of the rites, ceremonies and creeds borrowed from Pagans, and point out a few of the morals and sentiments attributed to Jesus, which were much earlier taught by others, leaving a fuller consideration of the subject for another occasion.

I. The world's Saviors have been numerous; they have been believed in in many different countries, and some run far back into antiquity. Here are the names of a portion of them:

1. Christna or Chrishna, of Hindostan.
2. Buddha Sakia, of India.
3. Zoroaster, of Persia.
4. Crite, of Chaldea.
5. Baal and Taut, of Phœnica.
6. Thammuz, of Syria.
7. Fohi and Tien, of China.
8. Zulis, of Egypt.
9. Indra, of Thibet.
10. Devatat, of Siam.
11. Adad, of Assyria.
12. Prometheus, of Caucassius.
13. Æsculapius, of Egypt and Greece.
14. Wittoba, of Telingonese.
23. Hil and Feta, of the Mandaites.
24. Universal Monarch, of the Sibyls.
25. Ischy, of Formosa.
26. Pythagoras, of Samos.
27. The Holy One, of Xaca.
28. Divine Teacher, of Plato.
29. Adonis, of Greece.
30. Alcestos of Euripides.
31. Hercules, son of God of Alcmena.
32. Apollo, son of Isis.
33. Hesus and Bremrillah, of the Druids.
34. Odin, of Scandinavia.
35. Alcides, of Thebes.

15. Xamolxis, of Thrace.
16. Zoor, of the Bonzes.
17. Atys, of Phrygia.
18. Bali, of Afghanistan.
19. Jos, of Nepaul.
20. Mikado, of the Sintoos.
21. Beddru, of Japan.
22. Cadmus, of Greece.
36. Thor, son of Odin of the Gauls.
37. Salivahand, of Bermuda.
38. Gentant and Quexalcota, of Mexico.
39. Ixion, of Rome.
40. Quirinius, of Rome.

This list of Saviors can be considerably extended, and not exhaust the entire number, but probably here are enough for all practical purposes to redeem one world from the curse of angry gods, and if this number cannot save it, perhaps it will have to be lost.

Several of these Saviors were said to have been begotten of God and born of virgins. Half the number were crucified for the salvation of the world, dying in great agony; and all were said to have received marked favor from heaven, and were considered special mediators and atoning sacrifices for the sins of man, and prior to the reputed life and death of Jesus.

II. That the traditions, rites, ceremonies and dogmas of Christianity were copied or purloined from older religious systems, is easily seen:

1. The birth of many of the Saviors of the ancients were claimed to have been pointed out by the stars.

2. Several of them were said to have been born in a stable and in a manger.

3. The birth of a number of them were announced by angels to shepherds.

4. Wise men or magi were claimed to have visited them in their early infancy, and to have worshiped and made them presents.

5. The 25th of December was the birthday designated for several of them, and has been a special day for feasts and ceremonies in commemoration and

in honor of the sons of gods for thousands of years.

6. The titles of the Heathen Saviors were much like those claimed for the Judean Savior. "The Most High," "the Lord of Life," "Holy Living God," "Son of God," "Mediator," "Savior," "Redeemer," "Redeemer of the World," "the Lamb of God," "the Ram of God," "the Holy Lamb," "the True Light," "the Sun of Righteousness," "True Light of the World," "Light of Men," "Guide to the Erring," "Advocate with the Father," are some among the great number of titles given to the pagan Saviors.

7. The legend of the Savior being saved from destruction when all the other infants were killed—as in the time of Herod—was handed down from centuries before that date.

8. The retirement and forty days' fasting of the Savior is an ancient heathen legend.

9. The performance of miracles was attributed to nearly all the Saviors, and greatly dwelt upon. Several raised the dead.

10. The older Saviors had disciples, whom they led about over the country, whom they taught, and whose feet they washed.

11. They taught multitudes in the villages, on the highway, in the fields and in the wilderness.

12. At the crucifixion of some of them, the sun was said to have been darkened and earthquakes to have taken place.

13. Several of the demi-gods were said to have descended into hell after their crucifixion.

14. The claim that they arose from the dead, from the grave and from the sepulchre was accorded to a number of them.

15. The miraculous ascension into heaven was claimed for a part, at least, of the Oriental Saviors.

16. The doctrine of "the Trinity" is a thousand years older than Christianity.

17. The Holy Ghost idea came from India.

18. The belief in a Devil originated in heathen lands.

19. The cross, as a religious symbol, was used hundreds of years before Christ, in India, Thibet, Egypt and other countries.

20. Immortality of the soul was first taught by pagans.

21. The personalized idea of the "word," or "logos," the creator, as used by St. John, was of Oriental origin.

22. Baptism by water was early practiced in India and Persia.

23. The Holy Ghost descending in the form of a dove, is an ancient Eastern legend.

24. The Sacrament of the *Eucharist* came from the pagans.

25. Anointing with oil was practiced from time immemorial.

26. The worship of demi-gods—as we have seen—was of heathen origin.

27. Belief in saints and the reverence of them dates back many centuries before Christianity.

28. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments was first taught by pagans.

29. A great and final day of judgment originated in heathen countries.

30. The belief in the resurrection of the dead is much older than Christianity.

31. The belief in angels and spirits was held by many pagan nations thousands of years ago.

32. Fasting and prayer were of Eastern origin.

33. The power to forgive sin was taught by heathens.

34. A belief in bibles being the word of God existed in many pagan countries, and they have several bibles older than the Jewish book.

35. The "second birth" was first taught in Heathendom.

36. Confession and absolution of sin were of pagan origin.

37. Monasteries and monks existed hundreds of years in Central Asia before the era of Christianity.

38. The order of the Priesthood long existed in all pagan countries.

39. Repentance and humility were enjoined by the ancients.

40. The efficacy of prayer directed to the gods, was early taught in all heathen lands.

In view of the fact that the entire system of Christianity was copied, borrowed and appropriated from pre-existent systems, we are led to wonder at the dearth and sterility of the minds of its founders in the line of originality and invention. It would seem that an ordinary intelligence would have been able to get up a few new ideas, at least. If we take from Christianity all that was borrowed from heathen lands, there is literally nothing left of it save its cruel persecutions and horrible bloodshed, which it seems its founders did not borrow from heathen nations, and here their originality and invention became active. We shall examine this feature of Christianity more fully in subsequent articles.

III. We have room for a small number only, of the moral maxims of the pagan Saviors, demi-gods and sages, but probably sufficient to show that they contain the gist of the over-lauded maxims attributed to Jesus, and that they were the originals from which the later productions were copied :

1. MENU, nearly a thousand years B. C., said: "Let no man be offended with those who are angry with him, but reply gently to those who curse him." "Endure injuries and despise no one." "Commit no hostile act for your own preservation."

2. PITTACUS taught 650 years B. C., "Do not to your neighbor, what you would take ill from him."

3. CONFUCIUS taught 500 years B. C., "Do unto another what you would have him do unto you, and do not to another what you would not have him do unto you. Thou needest this alone. It is the foundation of all the rest." "Desire not the death of thine enemy." "Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles." "When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them." "To subdue one's self and return to propriety is perfect virtue."

4. CHRISTNA thus taught: "He is my beloved servant who is the same in friendship and hatred, in honor and dishonor, in cold and in heat, in pain and in pleasure; who is unsolicitous about the event of things; to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little speech, and is pleased with whatever comes to pass; who owneth no particular home, and who is of a steady mind." "He who can bear up against the violence produced by lust and anger in this life, is properly employed and a happy man."

5. BUDDHA thus taught: "Let a man overcome anger with love; let him overcome evil by good; let

him overcome the greedy by liberality; the liar by the truth." "Not to commit any sin; to do good and purify one's mind, that is the teaching of the awakened."

6. THALES, 464 years B. C., said: "Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing." "Cultivate friendship for an enemy." "Be kind to your friends, that they may continue so, and to thine enemies, that they may become so." "Prevent injuries if possible; if not, do not revenge them." "Be to everybody kind and friendly." "Speak evil of no one, not even thine enemies."

7. BIAS, one of the noted seven wise men of Greece, nearly 600 years before Christ, taught thus: "It is a proof of a weak and disordered mind to desire impossibilities." "The greatest infelicity is not to be able to endure misfortunes patiently." "Great minds alone can support a sudden reverse of fortune." "The most pleasant state is to be always gaining." "Be not unmindful of the miseries of others." "If you are handsome, do handsome things; if deformed, supply the defects of nature by your virtues." "Be slow in undertaking, but resolute in executing." "Praise not a worthless man for the sake of his wealth." "Do all the good you can, and whatever good you do, ascribe the glory of it to the gods." "Lay in wisdom as the store of your journey from youth to old age, for it is the most certain possession."

It is claimed that he wrote 2000 verses of similar moral maxims.

8. PYTHAGORAS thus taught: "Every man ought to speak and act with such integrity that no one would have reason to doubt his simple affirmation." "It is

impossible he can be free who is a slave to his passions." "To revenge yourself on an enemy, make him your friend."

9. SOCRATES taught: "Return not an injury if you have received one." "Return not evil for evil."

10. PLATO, the Grecian, taught thus: "The unrighteous man, or the sayer and doer of unholy things, had far better not yield to the illusion that his roguery is cleverness." "For men glory in their shame; they fancy they hear others say of them, 'these are not mere good-for-nothing persons, burdens on the earth, but such as men should be who mean to dwell safely in a State.'" "There are two patterns set before them in nature; the one blessed and divine, the other godless and wretched." "Honor is a divine good, and no evil thing is honorable." "The perfectly just man is he who loves justice for its own sake; not for the honors and advantages that attend, and is willing to pass for unjust while he practices the most exact justice, and will not suffer himself to be moved by disgrace or distress, but will continue steadfast in the love of justice, not because it is pleasant, but because it is right."

11. SEXTUS, over 400 years B. C., taught thus: "What you wish your neighbors to be to you, such be ye also to them." "Endure all things, if you would serve God."

12. ARISTOTLE, 380 years B. C., thus taught: "We should conduct ourselves toward others as we would have them act towards us."

13. ARISTIPPUS, 365 years B. C., taught thus: "Cherish that reciprocal benevolence which will make you as anxious for another's welfare as for your own."

14. ISOCRATES, 338 years B. C., said: "Act toward others as you would have them act towards you."

15. PUBLIUS SYRUS said: "Pardon the offenses of others, but never your own." "You can accomplish by kindness what you cannot by force." "Better overlook an injury than avenge it." "It is a kingly spirit to return good deeds for evil ones." "Receive an injury rather than do one."

16. THE ESSENES enjoined: "Lay up nothing on earth, but fix your mind solely on heaven." "Forsake father, mother, brothers and sisters, houses and lands."

17. HILLEL, 50 years B. C., inculcated: "Do not to others, what you would not like others to do to you."

18. ANTONINUS said: "Be to every one kind and friendly."

19. PHILO taught: "It is our first duty to seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness."

20. MARCUS AURELIUS, a Roman Emperor of the second century, but who was a heathen, said: "Be cheerful and seek not external help, nor the tranquility which others give." "A man must stand erect, and not be kept erect by others." "Never value anything as profitable to thyself which shall compel thee to break thy promise, to lose thy self-respect, to curse, to act the hypocrite, to desire anything which needs walls and curtains." "If thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy, and there is no man able to prevent this."

Similar maxims of morality and exalted sentiments from the sages and teachers who lived and died prior

to the Christian era, might easily be quoted to the extent of a large volume, but this is not our present purpose. We have, however, cited enough, together with what we have given our readers in previous articles, to show that morals as pure and unexceptionable were uttered by numerous teachers, as Jesus is said to have promulgated. Conceding to Jesus all the praise that may be due him for many of his utterances, candor and truth compel the averment that his best sayings were not original with him, and if they were not absolutely borrowed, they were certainly used by others long before him.

We see in the above extracts as much to commend and revere as in the teachings of the Nazarene, and less that is objectionable. As much as may be said by the admirers of Jesus in favor of his inculcations, he certainly taught some doctrines that would, if carried out, not tend to the benefit of the world. For instance, his charge to "take no thought for the morrow," would prevent enterprise, provision for the future, and throw man back into a state of idleness and objectless barbarism. His instructions to give a man a cloak if he steals a coat, is simply a premium for crime. The turning of the left cheek to be smitten if the right is thus attacked, would be craven, unmanly and productive of no good. The scourging and beating of money-changers was not extremely lamb-like. Getting angry at a fig tree, and cursing it because it did not bear figs at the wrong season of the year, did not indicate forbearance, discretion or good judgment.

We cannot see that the teachings of Jesus possess any superiority over those of the sages who lived before him. They appear no more godlike, no more ex-

alted, and no more inspired than the maxims of his predecessors. As his were subsequent productions, they cannot be the original, and they sound much like plagiarisms and piracies.

From what is here shown, but one conclusion is possible, and that is, that the system of Christianity is of a composite character, and was made up of the dogmas, legends and traditions of the older heathen systems which preceded it; and that it is only PAGANISM in a revised form.

And it is this system of revised ancient dogmas and absurdities, that costs this country $200,000,000 annually; and the return it yields in education, in intellectual growth, in the knowledge of Nature, in the laws of the Universe, and in real good to the people, is meagre indeed. We hail, however, the light of science and truth, which will ultimately drive all pagan dogmas from the world.

The foregoing references and quotations are from Sir Wm. Jones' *Asiatic Researches*, Max Muller, Jacolliot, Taylor's "Diegesis," Higgins' "Anaclypsis," and last, but not least, Graves' "The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors," a recent publication, and a most valuable work touching the subject here considered.

ELISHA THE PROPHET.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

In reviewing the wonderful characters mentioned in the Bible and the wonderful achievements they accomplished, Elisha the Prophet must by no means be omitted. He was a man of such remarkable abilities and one who performed such extraordinary feats that he can not be overlooked.

At the time Elijah the Tishbite found him plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and after boiling the flesh of one yoke of the team with the harness, trappings and implements, and giving the flesh to the people to eat, Elisha followed his master Elijah. Not much is said of him until they parted, at the time when Elijah went up bodily into the air in a chariot of fire, or a whirlwind, or both, or neither. It seems Elijah threw his mantle down to Elisha at the time he took his aerial flight, though we presume before he had gone many miles he found it so cold that he wished he had his blanket again to keep him from freezing. If however, he was riding in a chariot of fire he might

have found it quite warm enough for comfort, especially for the parts of his body which came in immediate contact with the chariot.

When Elisha found himself alone, he gathered up the mantle his master had thrown to him and he rent his own clothes, making two pieces of one. He then retraced his steps to the river Jordan and performed his first feat worthy of mention, by smiting the waters with Elijah's mantle, whereupon the waters at once divided as they had done a short time before, when Elijah smote them, piling up like walls on each side, so that Elisha walked over on dry ground. Of all the rivers in the world, the Jordan was the most accommodating. On three occasions we are told its waters thus separated at the wish of man, walling up in a most marvelous manner, while no other, among the hundreds of rivers in the world have ever acted in this manner.

The second astonishing feat which Elisha performed was the "healing" or purifying of a spring of water, by throwing a little salt iuto it, by which process, waters that before were perfectly worthless, unfit for use, and which had rendered the adjacent land entirely barren were made pure. The salt did the business; not, however, from any chemical action produced, but by the peculiar manner in which the prophet deposited it. Another man might have deposited precisely the same amount of salt and in the same place, but it would have had no effect; it took the prophet to perform this little manipulation. As, however, the effect produced was a good one, as the waters were made pleasant and healthful, and as the land was reclaimed, we can only speak favorably of his labors on this occasion.

His third feat was of a different character, and one no benevolent, humane, kind-hearted person could commend. It seems he was on his way to Beth-el, when a number of children came out of the city and in a thoughtless, childish way sang out to him, "Go up thou bald head." It, perhaps, was not the height of good manners to thus speak to a wigless old man, and a stranger, but we cannot for a moment see how those words could possibly injure him, or why they should have seriously offended him. But they seem to have made the good man extremely angry, and he turned back and looked upon them savagely and cursed them in the name of the Lord. The words he uttered are not given, but we doubt not, as he "cnrsed," that they were very much worse than the harmless words the children had used. Sad to relate, as soon as these curses had escaped the lips of the man of God, two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the little children all to pieces. We must say this was one of the most cruel, heartless and diabolical pieces of business ever performed; that the thoughtless prattle of children should be punished by tearing forty-two of them by wild beasts, is most abhorent to every sentiment of sympathy and kindness in the human breast. If Elisha was the author of this cruelty, it is sufficient to cause his name to be execrated and abhorred to the latest moments of time as a heartless monster and a cruel demon. If the Jewish Jehovah was the author of this terrible conduct, he is equally culpable, and we cannot characterize such savage, unfeeling torture towards little children on his part, in any milder terms than in the case of his prophet.

The fourth memorable feat which Elisha performed

was of a more praiseworthy character—the production of a large quantity of water, without wind or rain. There had been a great scarcity of water for men and cattle, when he thus produced it in immense quantity, so that the whole country was fully supplied. In one respect Elisha seems to have transcended Elijah; the latter could produce water by causing rain to fall, but Elisha could bring abundance of water without rain. The process by which he performed this marvel is not divulged, and the world is left in ignorance *how one man could make so much water.*

The fifth wonder this man performed was in the manufacture of oil. He instructed a widow who had a pot of oil, to borrow all the vessels she could from her neighbors, and by his directions she filled them all with oil by pouring into them from the one vessel she had, which was so supplied, while she poured, as not to be exhausted till all were filled to the brim, as long as there were vessels to fill. What a pity that she could not have had a dozen or two of the large tanks we have seen in the Pennsylvania oil regions! What an oily time there would have been! Here was a secret richly worth knowing. It would exceed in value a flowing oil well. We know several soap makers who would give a large sum of money for the recipe enabling them to produce oil in this manner.

The sixth labor was not so remarkable, or at all events was within the scope of his natural powers, and similar operations are frequently performed by "men of God" in our own times. The prophet, in occasionally passing by a certain lady's house who had an aged husband, got in the habit of calling upon her, as his business led him in that direction, and he

soon became a favorite with the lady, and she caused to be prepared for him a little chamber to "turn into" whenever he came that way. She placed a bed, a table and a candlestick in his little chamber, thus affording him a comfortable place to enjoy himself in, during his frequent friendly visits. All this, we say, was done at the instance of the woman who contracted a warm friendship for the Prophet. Her husband, we repeat, was a very old man, and though she was a large woman, and doubtless robust and healthy, she had no children. The Prophet noticed all this, and came to her relief. He one day sent his servant, Gehazi, to call her to his room, and, after holding a short conversation with her, and they passed a limited period in each other's society, he assured her that in due time she would have a child, and he, being a prophet, could of course speak with certainty. Sure enough, in about nine months she had a son. The prophet was right, and here we have another remarkable exemplification of the great gift of prophecy.

We mention this matter of the large woman having a child, not as being anything very wonderful in itself. Though her husband were one hundred years of age, while she was fortunate enough to have a "man of God" in the house, all the minor difficulties could be surmounted. We merely mention it, as it leads to, and is connected with the Prophet's seventh great feat.

When the woman's son got to be a lad large enough to run in the fields, he was one morning taken with a bad headache, and was conveyed to his mother. She held him in her lap till noon, when he died—or at all events appeared to die. The mother took the

child and laid him on the Prophet's bed, and then hastened without delay to Mount Carmel to inform the Prophet of the sad event. He knew her at once when she was still some distance off, and sent Gehazi to enquire how she and the boy were. She was not long in informing him how it was with the lad, and he soon concluded to return with her. He sent his servant on ahead to lay his staff upon the body of the boy, to see if it would restore him, but it had no effect. When he arrived, however, he lay upon the boy, putting mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, and hands to hands. The body of the child soon began to grow warm, and he sneezed seven times and opened his eyes, a pretty good sign that if he had been dead he was so no longer.

Here, again, Elisha showed himself equal to his preceptor, Elijah. If one had raised the dead, so had the other. But as we have not faith enough to believe that any person really dead has ever been made to live again, we claim the right to think that if these stories are true at all, they were merely instances of suspended animation, and that the warmth of the prophets' bodies and their magnetism had favorably affected those lying in a comotose, or cataleptic state, by which means respiration and circulation were restored. The lad, at all events, was resuscitated ; and the Prophet afterwards showed his partiality for the mother and child, when a seven years' famine came upon the country, by sending them away to the land of the Philistines, where there was plenty ; and also in recovering her property for her upon her return. It is not stated what became of her aged husband, but it is altogether likely that he died.

Elisha's eighth feat was to destroy the poisonous

effects of some wild gourds which had been used with herbs to make pottage for the sons of prophets, amounting to one hundred in number, and who, by the by, on account of the scarcity of provisions, had become very hungry. He neutralized the poison by sprinkling a little meal in the pot—a simple and easy way, to be sure; but if another man had put it in, it would, probably, have done no good.

The Prophet's ninth feat was the curing of Naaman of leprosy, by hydropathic treatment, but, since cures as remarkable have been made by Priessnitz and his disciples, it is unnecessary to dwell upon the treatment here. One thing, however, Elisha did, which Priessnitz could not do, and that was to transfer a disease from one person to another, as the Prophet did, by fastening on Gehazi the leprosy which he removed from Naaman.

Elisha's tenth wonder was a performance of no mean pretensions. Several men were felling trees on the banks of the Jordan, when one of them accidentally lost his axe in the river, and of course it immediately sank to the bottom. The unfortunate man bewailed his loss, more especially as the axe was a borrowed one. This was certainly creditable to the fellow, for there are many who would care less about losing a borrowed axe than if it were their own. The Prophet, however, soon made it all right by throwing a stick into the water, thereby causing the axe to float on the surface. This is, unquestionably, a difficult trick to perform, as iron and steel are some ten times heavier than water. If any one doubts the difficulty of performing the feat, let him throw an axe into the river, and see how hard a job it will be to make it float. Nature's laws, of course, had to be set aside,

and the force of gravitation had to be suspended, to cause an axe, unaided, to float upon the surface of a river; but who knows what a man of God cannot do?

As his eleventh great achievement, may be mentiontioned his causing, by prayer, the eyes of a young man to be opened, so that he saw mountains full of horses and chariots of fire about the Prophet, and then by prayer causing blindness to fall upon a multitude. The first might have been a mere illusion, and we hope the last was only temporary blindness.

As great as this man was, and as much power as he possessed, old age and disease at last came upon him, and he died. He was not taken up into heaven in a carriage, as his predecessor had been, but was buried like an ordinary individual; but to show what remarkable virtue existed in his very bones, it may be stated, as the twelfth wonder connected with this remarkable man, that after he nad been some time buried, and when another body was let down into the same grave, the moment it touched the bones of Elisha it was instantly reanimated, and stood upon its feet. The bones of very few dead men possess this wonderful power.

A remarkable fact in the history of Elisha, as well as his master, Elijah, may be mentioned. In the Book of Kings a great deal is said about the two worthies, and they seemed to have very much to do with the affairs of the kings ruling at that time, and of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The wonderful feats they performed are mentioned in detail. The events of their lives seem much mixed up with the affairs of State, and the reader would readily suppose they were the two most important personages then living. But in Chronicles, where the reigns of the same kings,

Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram are given, Elisha is not mentioned, and Elijah is named but once, and then as having sent a writing to Jehoram, which could not have taken place till some seven years after he was said, in Kings, to have gone up in a chariot of fire to heaven.

In Chronicles nothing is said about the three years without rain or dew (and it would seem that the writer of that book ought to have known of the circumstance, if such a remarkable event occurred). Nothing is said about Elijah's calling down fire from heaven and burning a bullock, stones, dirt and water, and one hundred men. Nothing is said about his slaying four hundred and fifty men with his own hands. No mention is made of his parting the river Jordan with his mantle, and not a word is uttered about his going up in a fiery chariot. And not one of the wonderful performances of Elisha which we have named, is even hinted at. If Chronicles is a truthful book; if it is a part of the word of God, and if these events did really occur, the existence of these men at least ought to have been recognized, and their wonderful works mentioned. That they were not, is, to say the least, a very suspicious circumstance; and this fact, taken in connection with the improbable, unnatural and impossible deeds ascribed to them in Kings, is enough to make practical, matter-of-fact minds reject the entire narrative.

Did Jesus Really Exist?

BY D. M. BENNETT.

The extreme doubt whether such a person as Jesus Christ had a real existence is strengthened more and more the fuller the matter is investigated. The fact that he never wrote a line that has been handed down to posterity, that the world has no possible means of knowing any thing about such a personage having lived save what is obtained from the unknown authors of what are called the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; and when there is no evidence that these books were written before the second century, it can be readily understood that the life and character of the individual under consideration is extremely mythical, as there is no contemporaneous history showing that such a person lived.

Our opponents frequently quote a paragraph found in Josephus, corroborating the claim that such a person did live at one time in Judea. But Dr. Lardner, one of the most eminent Christian historians, long ago pronounced this an interpolation, a forgery, and that it never existed in the original manuscript of Jo-

sephus. This opinion of Dr. Lardner was also entertained by Gibbon, Ittigius, Blondell, Le Clerc, Vandale, Bishop Warburton, and Tanaquil Faber, the most of whom are noted Christian authorities. In fact the first Christian writers and authors of the past, as well as of the present day, unite in agreeing that the paragraph alluded to is a forgery. Eusebius, in the fourth century, was the first to call attention to the spurious passage, and he is generally accredited with having inserted the paragraph referrring to Jesus. On several occasions Eusebius proved himself amply able to use interpolation, spurious additions and forgeries. Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, page 70, in alluding to this characteristic of the early Christian Fathers, uses this language, that "it was not only lawful, but commendable to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety." It is lamentable that so little reliance can be placed upon the authenticity of the Christian writers in the early centuries of our era. The fact that they were crafty and designing men, and that they used their best abilities to build up the new system of religion which they had allied themselves to, requires no additional proof.

It is a well-known fact that, in the first and second centuries, there were three distinct classes of Christians; one the Gnostics, who firmly held that such a person or individual as Christ had not had an existence as a man in the flesh, and that he was a spirit only. The Arians were another class, who admitted that there was a man Jesus, but that he was merely a human being, and not a God. The third class maintained that he not only existed in the flesh, but that he was also the eternal God of heaven and earth. The

disputes and quarrels between these contending factions became very heated and bitter, until finally the third class, by strategy and superior numbers, overpowered those who denied that such a person as Christ had had a real existence, and forced them to abandon the field, and it afterwards became a recognized dogma of the Church that Jesus had not only been a man, but, also, was absolutely God. But that large numbers in the first two centuries did persistently and stoutly contend that such a person as Christ had not had a real existence in the body, cannot be effectually gainsaid, and is well calculated to excite our liveliest suspicions.

In taking into consideration the characteristics of men who have played an active part in different ages of the world in establishing the various systems of religion and creeds the world has known, it is not difficult to appreciate how such a system as Christianity might have gained a foothold among men without the events strictly having transpired which are claimed. In our own day, we have seen Mormonism arise from the merest pretenses and the barest assertions, and have seen it within a few decades grow into a system that now has very considerable strength and has the implicit confidence of thousands.

Mahometanism is another illustration of this religious growth. It originated in the claims, assertions and assumptions of an individual, and gradually spread over several countries until hundreds of millions accepted it as a God-given religion, and they have not a shade of doubt but what it is the most divine bequest ever made to the world. Those of us who are not under the influence of this religion, can easily see where its devotees are mistaken, and that they have been mis-

led by designing or deluded leaders. If it is impossible for us to feel the same veneration for their creed and their superstitions that they do, we can complacently and dispassionately view the position they occupy, with the disinterestedness of an outside observer, and can easily perceive the mistakes and fallacies they have made, as well as comprehend the untenability of the divine claims they set up.

So it is with Christianity. To those not encircled within the influence which it exerts, and who do not bow to the demands which it sets up, are able to see not only its defects, but the errors it makes in claiming a direct divine origin.

When we find that the authorities upon which a system rests are defective, and that they do not corroborate the claims put forth by its advocates, we have good grounds to doubt its truth. We remarked that the four gospels were unknown till near the close of the second century, or rather that there is no proof of their having an earlier existence. Irenæus was the first Christian writer who referred to them or recognized them as being extant, and he died in the forepart of the third century. Other pretended and spurious gospels, almost without number, had been known prior to this, but they were discarded as fraudulent, and those upon which the grand fabric of Christianity is founded, were unknown till near two hundred years after the time Jesus was said to have lived. What an uncertain data to build upon. What a fine opportunity was here afforded the early fathers to get up the gospel story, or to have it written to order. The gospels have been attributed to various Christian fathers, as well as to bishops, priests and monks, but with what amount of truth it is now impossible to

demonstrate. It is also claimed that the plot of the gospel story was handed down from the Essenes, the Therapeuts and the monks of Egypt, and was revised, re-written and re-located by Christians in the early centuries, similar to what Shakespeare did by the most of his plays, the plots of which were borrowed from the inventions and traditions of earlier times.

The Nicene Council, consisting of several hundred quarrelsome and pugilistic bishops, called together by that wholesale Christian murderer, Constantine, which assembled in the year 325, in which contentions and fights without number took place, took into consideration the authenticity of fifty or more "gospels," written by different individuals, and after indulging in the most acrimonious dissensions and fist-fights, finally decided by vote whether the different gospels presented were the word of God. They rejected all but the four now in the Testament, and one of those was admitted by a single vote; but it was not until the middle of the sixth century that the books now composing the New Testament were fully settled upon, several of them having been persistently discarded by previous authorities. Thus, we see, by what a frail tenure our boasted "word of God" hangs, and how easy it was for fraud and deception to have been practiced in getting it up.

The facts we have here mentioned, together with others we have before alluded to, the close resemblance between Jesus and the numerous demi-gods and teachers who preceded him, are quite sufficient to shake the confidence of the most credulous devotee in the actuality of his existence. Christna, Buddha and others have been considered, but if it is not too much like repetition, we will call attention to

others who preceded Jesus, and to whom his acts and sayings bear a very strong resemblance,

ALCIDES, of Egypt, was said to have been born of a virgin; to have performed miraculous cures; to have converted water into wine; to have cast out devils; to have raised two persons from the dead; to have restored sight to the blind; to have made the dumb to speak and the lame to walk. For Osiris, also, similar claims were made.

Of PYTHAGORAS, of Greece, his devout followers asserted that he was originally a spirit from heaven; that his birth was miraculously foretold; that his mother, a virgin, conceived by a spectre; that in his youth he astonished the doctors by his learning and knowledge; that he could foretell events; that he could subdue wild beasts; that he could be in two places at once; that he could walk on water; that he could handle poisonous serpents without injury; that he cured all manner of diseases; restored sight to the blind; cast out devils; allayed tempests; raised people from the dead, and thousands, almost, of other wonderful feats as narrated by Jambilicus. He was said to possess a very humble disposition; to be very kind to the poor; to have fasted and prayed, and that he advised his disciples to forsake relatives and houses and lands for religion's sake. In precepts, moral lessons and purity of life, there was a great similarity between him and Jesus, but the latter is not claimed to have existed till the former had been dead five hundred years.

PROMETHEUS was a mythical character, but five centuries before the time of Jesus it was held of him that he had a miraculous birth, that he had a band of disciples; that he taught the best moral precepts; that

he was finally crucified as an expiation for mankind amid signs, wonders, and miracles; that nature was convulsed, and that deceased saints arose from their graves; that the sun was darkened and refused to shine; that after crucifixion he descended into hell, and was afterwards seen to ascend into heaven.

APOLLONIUS of Tyana, in Cappadocia, had faithful disciples and biographers in Dumos and Philostratus, who made great claims for this remarkable personage, and which were implicitly believed by great numbers of people. That he had a miraculous conception; that his mother was a virgin; that all nature was subject to his power; that he performed great numbers of miraculous cures; that he restored the blind to sight; made the lame to walk; cast out devils; raised the dead; read the thoughts of those around him; caused a tree to bloom; spoke in languages he never learned; that he was transfigured; that he led a spotless life; that he did not marry, and opposed sexual pleasures; that he spent his time in teaching those who gathered around him; that he was a prophet, and could foretell events; that he was imprisoned and loaded with chains; that he was crucified midst a display of divine power; that he rose from the dead; that he appeared to his disciples after his resurection; that he finally ascended up to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, and much more of a similar character, and fully equal in every respect to what was claimed for Jesus.

Of SIMON MAGUS, who also existed before Christ, it was claimed that he was "in the beginning with God" that he existed from all eternity; that he took upon himself the form of man; that he was the "word" the son of God' that he was the second

person in the trinity; that he could control the elements; that he could walk in the air: that he could move any bodies at will; that he raised the dead; that he came to redeem the world from sin; that he was the world's "Savior," "Redeemer," and "the only begotten of the Father," and that through his name the world was to be saved.

Numerous other "Saviors" and "Redeemers," who lived before Christ might be named in this connection to show the striking similarity which existed between him and them, but we have already quoted enough to give the reader clearly to understand that there were, hundreds of years before the time of Jesus, abundance of material of which to spin and weave his story; and that taking all the facts into consideration, the prior existence of similar claims, and the extreme doubt of the authenticity of the gospel narratives of Christ, the strongest probability is that such a personage as Jesus never had an existence; or, that if he did exist, he was only a common mortal, to whom, a century or two after his death was falsely attributed by designing, dishonest persons, deific characteristics, impossible performances, and moral utterances, after the style of the fabulous demi-gods and distinguished teachers of older times.

TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS,

Containing two pages each of terse, trenchant reading matter, without redundancy.

Price by mail, 4 cts. per doz.; 25 cts. per hundred; $2.00 per thousand.

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway. N. Y.

Jonah and the Big Fish.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among all the pious stories to be found in that remarkable collection of wonderful tales—the old Jew-book—probably none have oftener been referred to than the one giving an account of Jonah and the whale. Fishermen, like sailors, have from time immemorial been noted as great story-tellers. Their "yarns" and adventures have been so incredible that they have passed into a proverb. To such extent has it been thought that fishermen's and sailors' stories are extremely apocryphal, that where an incredible tale or impossible yarn has been spun that nobody could believe, it has, by common consent, been denominated "fishy," or a "fish story." Among this large class of stories, Jonah and the whale, stands preeminent, the fishiest of all. Yet we are still required to believe it, and it is still, Sunday after Sunday, preached from the pulpit, because it is bound up in the "holy book" which we are repeatedly assured contains

"the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

We have no idea by whom the story was written, where it was written, nor when it was written. It may have been 500 years, 1000 years, or 2000 years before Christ. In fact, it matters very little where it was written, when, or by whom; it makes no difference with its veracity or credibility. If it is truth it depends not upon its narrator, and if it is false, all the saints in the calendar cannot make it true.

Our hero is first introduced to us as a prophet, and a son of Amittai. Who Amittai was we do not know, nor where he came from. We are told that the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it." In that age of the world the word of God seemed to seek out particular individuals and was not free alike to all. This was one of the very few cases where the God of the Jews seemed to take the slightest interest in the people of heathen nations; the Jews appearing to require and occupy all his time and attention. He was not only wholly indifferent as to what became of the ontside barbarians—the nations that were not Jews—but he seemed ever to be plotting against them, venting his spite upon them and continually aiding his special people to slaughter and destroy them. But in this case the wickedness of Nineveh troubled him greatly, and he made an unusual effort to reclaim them from their wickedness.

Jonah seemed to be a disobedient prophet, and was much like the ungoverned children in this age of the world, who when told to do a certain thing do directly the opposite. Thus Jonah instead of going to Nineveh started for Tarshish where he could get away from the presence of the Lord. Where in the world Tarshish

is, or was, no geographer has been able to determine, but wherever it was, God seems not to have visited it, for by going there Jonah was to escape his presence. The prophet proceeded to Joppa where he took passage on a boat in the Joppa and Tarshish line and paid his fare like a man. In this particular we place him ahead of the prophets and priests of our own time; when they travel by boat or by rail they either want to go at half-price or be dead-headed through. Jonah was no dead-head.

He was destined, however, to have an unpleasant voyage, for the Lord is said to have sent a great wind and brought on a mighty tempest so that the ship was in danger of being wrecked, and the sailors became alarmed. It is not likely this wind was sent from the Lord in any other sense than all winds may be said to come from him. Wind is the result of natural causes. The rarification of the atmosphere in some localities produced by heat, the cold air rushing in from other quarters to fill the vacuum, together with the electrical or magnetic conditions of the atmosphere are what produce currents, breezes, gales, tempests, hurricanes, tornadoes, and cyclones which are more or less severe, according to the conditions which rule at the time. In the heated portions of the earth, in the vicinity of the equator, these intense commotions of the atmosphere greatly abound; while in those regions approaching the poles, far less so. If a destructive storm visits any locality, and does any amount of damage, it is short sightedness, ignorance, and superstition which induces people to attribute it to the anger or vindictiveness of God. It only shows they do not understand the forces which control the

Universe, and which produce every result that takes place now, or ever has taken place.

Our man Jonah was doubtless well fitted for a sailor, without at all heeding the severity of the storm, and though unused to being on water, he was neither sea-sick nor alarmed. "He went down into the side of the ship" and went fast asleep, while all this commotion and terror prevailed around him. He must have been a regular stoic—a man of remarkable equanimity of mind to be thus wholly unaffected by the danger and the fury of the storm. It proves, at all events, that his conscience, for trying to get away from the presence of the Lord, did not trouble him severely. The captain of the vessel, however, in his great fear, hunted around and found Jonah and waked him up, and asked him what he meant, to be sleeping at such a time, and told him he ought to be awake, crying to God to save them from destruction. After the sailors had been some time engaged in throwing overboard such freight and luggage as would lighten the vessel, they concluded to cast lots to see which man among them had caused this terrible storm; as though a man could cause it, and as though casting lots would indicate with any certainty which man it was. They must have been ignorant and illy-informed people indeed, fully illustrating the superstition which characterizes sailors even to this day. As well might we now try murderers, thieves, incendiaries, perjurers and adulterers, by drawing straws, throwing dice, playing cards, or flipping pennies. It would be merely gambling, to ascertain whether a man was guilty or not—the most uncertain of all ways to establish guilt or innocence.

Of course the lot fell upon our poor Jonah; the

story could not otherwise have run in the right chan nel and the grand denouement could not have been as desired by the writer. The ignorant sailors felt positive, of course, that Jonah was the man who had caused the mischief, and they immediately interrogated him as to who he was, where he came from, what people he belonged to, and what he followed for a business. Jonah answered their questions in a truthful manner, at which the men became still more afraid, and asked why he had done as he had, and censured him for his base conduct.

It strikes us that this novel trial of a quiet stranger, by the crew of a ship in the height of a raging tempest, when it would be supposed every man would be required to take care of the ship—to man the vessel, to reef the sails, to cut away the masts, if necessary, and to do the many other things needful to be done in such an emergency, was indeed a most singular and most improbable proceeding; but it belongs to the "big fish story," and we must take it for granted that it was "all exactly so."

When the court which tried Jonah and found him guilty enquired of him what punishment should be executed upon him for being guilty of having the lot fall upon him, he answered like a brave, self-sacrificing fellow, and said: "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea." We insist, there have been few men in any age of the world who would have shown, under the circumstances, such a disregard for self and personal safety. Our opinion of Jonah is elevated, and he certainly was too good a man to be used for fish-bait. But they cast him into the sea and it immediately became very calm. He was the oil cast upon the troubled waters, and his being thrown

into the surging billows seems to have had a very pacifying effect upon God, and he calmed the winds and stilled the waters at once. Is it to be supposed that the casting of a prophet or priest overboard in this age of the world would still a tempest or calm a storm? Are not the laws which govern the Universe ever the same? and is not God "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever"?

But how about Jonah? What became of him? Why, a big fish, which providentially happened to be on the spot, "took the stranger in" out of the wet, where he could finish his nap at his leisure. As Jonah had such a happy faculty of adapting himself to surrounding circumstances, it may be supposed that his new berth was just to his taste. It was *snug* at all events.

The book of Jonah, with its forty-eight verses, all told, does not inform us what kind of a fish it was that took charge of the Prophet; but Jesus afterwards said it was a whale; and the original story says God prepared the fish for the purpose. If it was a whale, he must have *prepared* him, for naturalists inform us that the true whale cannot take anything into its mouth and swallow it larger than four inches through. God must have "prepared" the mouth and throat of that particular whale pretty extensively by stretching it and enlarging it, to enable him to swallow a man at a gulp. A shark could soon dispatch a prophet, but would probably "chaw" him up pretty badly first, and it is to be feared in such a case, even with God's help, the man would not be of much use three days afterwards.

It may be imagined that though Jonah had landed safely in the stomach of the fish, it would be diffi-

cult for him to find air enough there to sustain him for three days. If the fish had kept his mouth and throat constantly open, so as to let air in, it would not have answered, for the water would also have rushed in and drowned the poor Prophet at last. How he obtained air to breathe, and to enable him to keep up a three days cry to his God, is not satisfactorily explained. A rubber hose extending from the fish's stomach to the open air above the surface of the water, after the plan of a diving bell, would have been very convenient, but we have no right to suppose God provided such an apparatus.

Notwithstanding the extreme improbability of the truth of this fish story, it is amusing to see how easy it is for our Christian friends to believe it. It does not stagger them at all. If the book had said Jonah swallowed the whale, or half a dozen of them, for that matter, they could easy swallow it, Jonah, whales and all. There is no limit to their credulity and faith.

Fishes have astonishing digestive powers, and whatever is taken into their stomachs is usually "ground up" or digested in a short time. Under this state of things, it is a marvel how Jonah could have for three days escaped the strong digestive functions of that big fish. He must have been a "tough cuss," or the Lord must have "prepared" the fish's stomach, as he had previously "prepared" its mouth and gullet. Fish, also, are a hungry, voracious race, and as this big fish did not digest Jonah, and had no room for any other food for three days, he must naturally become very hungry. And Jonah, too, poor feilow, getting nothing to eat for over three days, he must have become quite hun-

gry also, thus shut up in the dark. Probably God "prepared" Jonah so the fish could not digest him, and "prepared" the fish so he should not become too hungry, and "prepared" Jonah's stomach likewise, and for the same purpose. This was, by the way, considerable of an enterprise, the Lord took upon himself on that occasion. There were several points to which he had to direct his attention. As an experiment or an adventure, it was probably quite amusing to him.

We are glad to be informed that after God had punished Jonah until he was satisfied, for the disobedience indulged in, that he "just spoke to the fish," and his words immediately acted as an emetic, and caused the fish to throw up Jonah on dry land, as good as ever. This experience was of much value to the prophet and he proceeded without delay to do the missionary work allotted him. He went to the exceeding great city of Nineveh which was three days journey across it, and cried out: "Yet in forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." His prophecy seems to have had a marvelous effect, and the king soon issued orders that neither man nor beast should eat nor drink anything, and that they should all be covered with sackcloth.

A few points to wonder at, and a few questions naturally arise in connection with this subject.

1st. How could a foreigner, as Jonah was in that city, and who spoke a different language, succeed in making himself understood by the populace?

2d. How could a single man preach effectually to a city of such immense dimensions, without spending months to accomplish it?

3d. Why should the Ninevites who worshiped Baal,

and who never heard of Jehovah, become so greatly frightened when Jonah visited them that they should so readily abandon their own God and accept Jonah's? It was certainly the most effectual missionary work ever accomplished. Nowadays it takes several missionaries, several thousands of dollars, and sometimes a year's time, to convert a single heathen, and he often don't stay converted; but here this man Jonah converted a large, populous city in a short time, unaided and alone.

4th. Where could so much sackcloth be found to cover all the men and women, and beasts also? Some of the merchants must have had an immense stock of sackcloth on hand.

5th. How is it that sackcloth has such a pacifying effect upon God? How does it operate upon his anger, his indignation, and his determination? Why should he prefer sackcloth as a garment for men, to any other kind of goods?

6th. Why should the beasts also be covered with sackcloth? Had they offended God, that they should repent before him?

7th. How could life be sustained if the people and the beasts were forbidden to eat or drink? What harm could there be in horses and asses taking food?

Many such questions will arise in the minds of the skeptical and those of little faith, but your true believer takes it all in without a question or a doubt. "Blessed are they who believe all they are told, for they shall always be easily imposed upon."

The most agreeable part of the story is, that the Ninevites quit their evil ways, and that God changed his mind about destroying them; or, in other words, that he did not keep the cruel promise he had made. A bad

promise is always better broken than kept. But this course of God's made Jonah very angry. After he had prophesied that the city should be destroyed, he wanted the destruction to come without failure or postponement on account of the weather, or any other reason, and rather than the people should not be destoyed he preferred to die himself. He retired from the city and made a booth on the east side, where he could sit in the shade, and see if God would do what he agreed to do,

The Lord seemed to take a little pity on Jonah and caused a gourd to grow up in a single night so as to shade the disappointed Prophet, but even in this he changed his mind again, for as soon as he found Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd, he "prepared" a worm to eat it and to make it wither and die. Thus, according to the accounts we get, God is alternately sending blessings and curses—pleasing or displeasing. He makes us glad one day with something, that is almost sure to be destroyed the next day, thus, making our condition worse than at first.

The finale of this fish story is well known. Nineveh was not destroyed. The sackcloth, the fasting, and the ashes saved it, and caused God to place a higher value upon the more than six score of thousand souls who were in the city, who could not discern their right hand from their left, also "much cattle." It was so frequent that he destroyed thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, and even seventy thousand human beings at a time for trifling provocations, that it is refreshing to find that he sometimes exercised mercy. But we regret to think that his anger toward the Ninevites did not continue to be appeased, especially after making such an unheard of effort in its behalf ; for though he

relented on that occasion, it was but a short time before the city was destroyed for a certainty. According to the chronological notes of the Bible, Jonah prophesied 860 years before Christ, and according to Diodorus' history, Nineveh was destroyed by Arbaces, the Mede, 876 years before Christ, which was sixteen years before Jonah's preaching saved it. How singular, too, that God should have utterly destroyed it so near the time when it had been converted over to himself! These little discrepancies, however, must not disturb us. "All things," you know, "are possible with God."

What became of Jonah we are not told. Our opinion is, that after that adventure he kept away from the water. If another fish got after him, and swallowed him, we have no account that it vomited him up, and it is more than probable that his body, or portions of it, became, like this story, fish, fishy.

The principal use made by our Christian friends of this remarkable fish story, is, that it was such a grand symbol or prototype of the death, burial and resurrection of the "blessed Savior." The quotation from Matthew (xii. 40) is well remembered, where Jesus says, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." But here again is a slight discrepancy; Jesus, according to the record, was not three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He was placed in the tomb on Friday night, and Sunday morning he was up bright and early, in good time for breakfast, only one day and two nights, the most that can be made of it. Thus his own words were proved untrue. It is barely possible, however, that he found

the heart of the earth so uncomfortably hot, that he did not wish to stay there his time out. Scientists assure us that the centre of the earth is a molten mass of dense, fused, super-heated metals, hotter than any furnace that can be conceived of. If this is so—and it seems very probable—it would not be a comfortable place for a God to stay in for three days and nights. When we bear in mind, however, that it is four thousand miles to the heart of the earth and four thousand miles back again, we may well suppose he could not stay there very long and make the trip in thirty-six hours from the time he started, and that, in consideration of the impediments to rapid traveling which dense matter would necessarily present, it must be confessed that he did remarkably well to make the trip in such quick time—the best on record. Verily, verily, which story is the hardest to believe, the "fish story," or the "heart of the earth story?"

A Word of Advice.

READER: If you wish a live, fearless, outspoken, Radical sheet, subscribe for

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

a Weekly Journal of Free Thought and Reform. Does not every true Liberal feel interested in the success of this enterprise? And can he have fully discharged his duty, who does not aid in its support?

Published at $2.00 per year, including postage, by

D. M. BENNETT,

335 Broadway N. Y.

AN OPEN LETTER TO JESUS CHRIST.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

From The Truth Seeker of Nov. 1, 1875.

It is quite possible some people may deem it improper that a letter addressed to the distinguished personage named above should be written, but we cannot so regard it. Countless prayers and appeals are daily made to him from all sorts of people, from all sorts of places, and upon all sorts of subjects. Every one says or asks what he pleases, and no man is authorized to dictate what shall be said. A prayer is an appeal, a letter is another form of appeal. Any individual has a right to either form. That a letter is any more improper than a prayer is not obvious, and in this case a letter is preferred. It was at first thought best to send it in the care of Messrs Moody and Sankey, the noted Evangelists now conducting business, for a limited period, at the Skating Rink in our neighboring City, and, as generally supposed, in the immediate interest of the personage in point, as being the place of all others where a letter would be most likely to reach him; but as there is not a little uncertainty as to the precise

locality where a letter or parcel would be sure to reach him, so as to receive a reply, it was deemed best to insert it in these columns, believing it would attract his attention as soon in the pages of THE TRUTH SEEKER as any other place, from the fact that so many worthy people carefully peruse its columns. If there is any informality in the mode, it probably will make no essential difference to the party addressed. He is represented as having said "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." Now we labor constantly, and also are heavy laden—laden with doubt and uncertainty on many points, laden, in common with many others, with a want of true knowledge, which want, is ignorance. This ignorance very generally prevails over the entire world. May it be dispelled!

To His Excellency, IMMANUEL J. CHRIST, *otherwise called "Prince of Peace," "Sun of Righteousness," "Lion of the Tribe of Judah," "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "The Messiah," "The Redeemer," "The Savior," "The Bridegroom," "The Lamb of God," "Captain of our Salvation," "Son of God," "Son of Man," etc., etc.*:

RESPECTED SIR: Learning from our daily papers that it is expected you will pass a few days in our immediate vicinity, in company with your agents, Moody and Sankey, who are supposed to be in your special service, and who have just commenced a grand starring engagement through our principal cities, in your interest, I embrace this opportunity to address you in this manner, hoping I may be able to attract your attention and to receive a reply. I am in quest of truth, and many say it is to be found with

you, and to attain any good gift whatsoever of you, it is only necessary to ask. I wish *knowledge* and *information* on many subjects, and I hereby make my wants known, I trust with due respect and in a proper spirit. If I have not troubled you latterly as often as many do, I hope it will not disparage my chances of recognition.

If your memory serves you, you probably can bring to mind, that something over a quarter of a century ago, I was in the habit of addressing you regularly four or five times a day, and from one year's end to another, but finally coming to the conclusion that my appeals were not heard, or that they availed me nothing, I discontinued them, thus saving much time and breath, as well as disappointment also, and losing nothing, so far as I was able to judge. After a silence of more than twenty-five years, it is hoped this effort will be successful; but if it is not, I shall not be greatly surprised.

If you can make it convenient at intervals from duty, during these revival times, either during the present engagement of Moody and Sankey at the Skating Rink in Brooklyn, or at their coming engagement in January next, at the Hippodrome on Fourth avenue, in this city, (formerly Barnum's Circus, and afterwards Gilmore's Concert Garden, and Shook & Palmer's Lager-beer Saloon,) or if at any other time, you can spare a few moments to communicate with me upon the subject matter of this letter, I hope I shall be duly grateful, and I assure you I will try to make good use of the information received.

I shall not have room in one letter to enquire of you all I wish to know, but if I am successful in obtaining answers to these questions, I may sometime

address you again, but in any event, I trust I approach you in a proper spirit, and that I give no offence. I wish not to be impertinent, but to indicate to you the points upon which I need light. If you are truly the source of light, may I not hope to be successful?

In nearly all the lives and biographies that have been written of you, a great lack exists of a description of the days of your infancy, childhood and youth. How is it that the "Evangelists," who are said to have been divinely delegated to write your life and teachings, should have been so silent in reference to this interesting portion of your existence?

Were those items purposely suppressed, or was it simply accidental?

Should not a truthful record of you have contained a full account of your early life as well as your later?

There is a great uncertainty relative to the origin of your existence; the account we have seems to rest largely upon a dream which it is said your stepfather dreamed. May I ask you, is that account reliable?

Is a dream of such a nature and character—that too, when related by a third person—as to safely build the faith of a world upon, especially when the final salvation of that world, depends upon the correctness and infallibility of that faith?

Were you begotten by the Creator of the Universe, and was he personally present on the occasion?

Were you begotten by the same process as all other beings have been, who have lived in this world, or was it out of the ordinary course of nature?

Was your mother psychologized or mesmerized, or

otherwise rendered insensible, or did she retain her consciousness?

Did she participate in the interesting proceding; was she simply passive, or was she overcome by a force which she could not resist?

Did love have ought to do in the transaction? and if so, was it an example of "free-love?"

Did the occurrence cause any scandal in the neighborhood, and was it generally understood that your step-father had dreamed out the true theory?

If you are part God and part human, can you not properly be called a hybrid, a half-blood, an amalgamation or a miscegenation?

Your friends, the clergy, assert that you existed as an individual from all eternity, and that your begetting and birth, eighteen hundred and seventy-five years ago, was merely a formality for the purpose of endowing you with the quality of mortality. Is that so?

Did you, then, retain your consciousness during the nine months of your mother's gestation? If so, may I ask, did not such close confinement for so long a period become somewhat irksome?

Had you full consciousness during the days of your infancy?

Was the star which was said to point out to the wise men who sought you in the stable in which you was born, a real star like others, millions of miles away, and which are immense bodies of matter, or was it a little star gotten up especially for the occasion, and which moved near the surface of the earth?

Was it so important that those men from the East should find you, while yet a new born babe, that a

star should be delegated to leave its course to point out to them your precise locality ?

Do you remember the critical period of "cutting teeth" ?

Was there any "Mrs. Winslow" in those days, to prepare "Soothing Syrup" for the babies ?

Were you much troubled with colic, croup, bowel-complaint or worms ?

At what age did you have the mumps, the measles and the whooping cough ? Did you have them light or severe ?

Did you wear petticoats when you were little, and can you remember your first pair of pants ?

Can you remember when you first began to run out of doors and play with the boys and girls ?

Did you know, when you was a little boy, that you was God, and the Ruler of the Universe ?

Is it true as narrated in the New Testament, styled "Apochryphal," that when you were a small child and traveling with your mother, that she placed you on the back of a mule that, by enchantment, had been changed from a young man, and that you transformed him back to a young man again ?

Is it true that you rolled up clay in the form of birds and then made them fly away in the air ?

Did the water in which your mother had washed you, cure two sick children ?

Did you cause a boy to die because he carelessly ran against you ?

Did you go to school and did you like study ?

Did you learn rapidly?

Did you know all things from all time, including the ordinary branches of education taught in schools, or did you have to study and learn like other boys?

Did you ever play hookey?

Were you fond of boyish sports? Were marbles, "hop-scotch," leap-frog and base-ball in vogue at that time?

Did you ever fall in love with any girls of your age, and if so did anything serious come of it?

How old were you when you commenced working at the carpenters' trade?

Did you stretch boards, doors, etc.. for your step-father when he made them too short?

How did you like the carpentering business?

If you were God and knew all things past, present and future, why did you not get up some such inventions as sawing mills, planing machines, morticing machines, matching machines, or scroll and circular saws, which for the last fifty years have proved themselves so valuable in saving labor?

Why did you not leave some such invention behind you to assist in immortalizing your name?

How came you to quit the carpenters' business? Was it not a good trade at that time?

Did you like preaching and performing miracles better?

Have you ever doubted whether your first miracle, changing water into wine, at the wedding in Cana, was well advised, especially as the guests were already drunk?

Have you not many times, with sadness, noticed the bad effects of intemperance and the undue use of intoxicating drinks?

Have you ever thought that the miracle alluded to, was setting a bad example to young people, and an encouragement to wine-bibbers?

Did it ever occur to you that it was not strictly

moral and not according to the commandments, to go into other people's corn fields on the Sabbath and pluck corn, without permission ?

Upon mature reflection, do you still think you were right and reasonable when you got angry at the fig-tree and cursed it because it did not bear figs at an untimely season of the year ?

Was it not offering a reward for theft—a premium for crime—to demand, when a man's coat is stolen that his cloak also should be given to the thief ?

Do you now think it would be sensible for a man to pluck his eye out if he had gotten dirt in it, if it became inflamed or if any defect in the sight occurred ?

If a man should have a boil or a felon on his right hand, would you still advise him to cut it off ?

Would it not be better to remove the offending disease, rather than destroy the organ or part brought into affliction ?

Do you at present think it was amiable and filial in you to treat your mother with disrespect, as when you asked, " Who is my mother ? "

May I ask, do you still require your followers to hate father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children, on your account ?

Does it afford you any pleasure, for a man to hate his own blood-relations ?

Is it a correct principle in morals, that a person be required to hate his parents, his brothers and sisters, wife and children ?

Do you still think it kind and god-like to damn people to endless punishment because they do not believe that which they cannot believe ?

Can a person believe just what he pleases, whether convinced or not ?

Do you still think the example of mendicancy and idleness the best example you could have set your fellow men?

Is not the doctrine "take no thought for the morrow," calculated to prevent enterprise, thrift and forethought? Would we have anything to eat in winter, if we did not prepare for it in summer?

Was it strictly right for you to instruct your disciples to take an ass or a mule to which they had no right?

Was it a mark of amibility and peacefulness on your part to whip, and beat, and scourge the money changers and those who sold merchandise in the temple?

Would you not have a lively time now, were yon to scourge with cords all who are engaged in that business?

Can you explain the discrepancy between your prediction and its fulfillment, as to the end of the world, when you said: "Verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away until all these things are fulfilled?

Did you not at that time think the end of the world was near at hand, and were you not mistaken?

When you went without food for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, did you not endanger your life? Can a man now go forty days without food or drink, and live?

When the Devil took you up into a very high mountain and showed you all the kingdoms of the earth, did he carry you, as boys say, "pig-back," or in what way did he carry you?

How high was the mountain?

Could you see the countries on the opposite side of

the globe any better for going on to a high mountain ?

Did you get a good view of Rhode Island and New Jersey ?

Did you at that time know the earth is a round ball, or did the person know it who wrote the account ?

Did you know at the time you were accompanying the Devil on this mountain trip, that he was your deadliest foe, as well as the great enemy of the human race ?

When you were riding on his back through the air, why did you not embrace the opportunity and choke the villain to death ?

Would it not have been the greatest favor you possibly could have conferred upon the human race ?

Would it not have been vastly better than to be yourself put to death ?

Did it please your loving Father better that you should die, than his old enemy and creature, the Devil ?

Did your blood pacify his disturbed feelings better than the Devil's would ?

Does blood actually appease your Father's anger ?

Did not the blood of bullocks, rams and he-goats, formerly have that effect ?

Does he still have a fondness for blood ?

Were the chemical constituents of your blood materially different from other men's, that it could exert a more potent effect upon the anger of your Father ?

If it was either through the plan of your Father, or through the intrigues of the Devil that you were put to death, was there not partiality and injustice in the business ?

Did it do your Father any good, or the Devil any harm, for you to die?

Would it not have been better for your Father, for yourself and for the whole world, if the Devil could have been the one to be put to death and then had remained dead?

What was the Devil ever made for?

Was it not the greatest mistake, the greatest folly that was ever committed?

Had there been no Devil, would not everything have been lovely with everybody, and would there have been any one to vex your Father?

Does not the Devil get fully nine-tenths of the whole human family, and does he not annoy your Father and yourself more than all the world besides?

Why is it you still suffer him to live?

Is it because you need him to officiate as Chief-Burner-General in the nether regions of brimstone, and to carry out your will in pitching and punching and burning poor hapless beings to the latest moments of eternity, and who had no hand in bringing themselves into existence or in getting up the vile natures with which they are endowed?

Is there not really a tacit, secret understanding—a partnership in fact—between the Devil, your Father and yourself?

Does not the Devil carry out the wishes of your Father and yourself, in punishing and tormenting his helpless victims?

Could he be more faithful in your service, if he occupied the same throne with you?

If men act badly, or fail to meet the approbation of your Father or yourself, does not Christian theology teach that the Devil torments them for it?

Would your grand scheme of salvation be worth anything without the Devil ?

Is not the Devil in the divine programme a personage equally as important as your father or yourself ?

Could you get along without a Devil ?

Would the system of theology which we have in this country, and which is attributed to you, be worth a row of pins without a Devil in it ?

Could your sixty thousand clergymen in this country, or the six hundred thousand in Christendom, get along without a Devil ?

Would their business pay running expenses except for a devil to warm it up ?

Really, after all, considering how much the Devil has done towards carrying out the divine plan concocted by your father and yourself; how much he has done for the human race by introducing education, science, inventions, innovations, and Freethought, into the world, while your clergymen and your church have been doing all they could to keep them out, is he not after all, a pretty good fellow?

Is he really as cruel and relentless as the clergy represent him ?

Is it your Father or the Devil that is the most revengeful and unforgiving ?

Let me ask you, can you be happy in heaven, seated on the throne at the right hand of your Father, the four beasts near, with the hundred and forty-four thousand saints dressed in white robes, bowing continually before your throne, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, that song which no man can learn ; I ask, can you be happy thus, while you know the poor, wretched, unfortunate damned are writhing and screaming in the torments of hell ?

Do not the shrieks of the damned wretches sometimes penetrate even to your throne and overpower, for the moment, that continuous song of Moses & Co.?

Can you be completely happy thus surrounded, when you know countless millions of poor, weak creatures are suffering the most excruciating tortures?

Infidel, as I am, I could not be happy under such circumstances, and were I to believe it possible that ninety-nine hundreths of the human race are doomed to forever suffer such tortures without cessation or alleviation, I should heartily curse existence and the author of it.

Would it not be vastly better to allow those pitiful wretches to go out of existence than to keep them in endless torment?

What possible good can it do your Father, yourself or any being to punish eternally quintillions of poor fallible men and women?

Is there no possibility of ending this most wretched and damnable business?

To return; when the Devil took you up into that high mountain, to show you all the kingdoms of the earth, and when he offered them to you, did you not know that he did not own a foot of them, and that they belonged to the estate of your Father?

If you knew this, was it much of a virtue in you that you did not accept his offer and yield to temptation?

Do you think it was a sharp thing in the Devil to undertake to play such a game with a God?

Was not the Devil, who could transport you on to the top of a high mountain, equally as large and as strong as yourself?

Was he the same Devil, or the same sized Devil that you subsequently cast out of the wild man you found raving among the tombs?

If that was a full-sized Devil, how could he get into a man?

Mark says the Devil left the man and went into two thousand swine; were there two thousand Devils in the man, or did the one Devil divide up into two thousand parts?

When the two thousand swine rushed down a steep place in the sea and were drowned, what became of the Devils? Were they drowned, or did they enter the fishes?

Mark says all these Devils were in one man, and Matthew says there were two men that had the Devils, which was correct? Did Matthew see double?

If one told the truth, did not the other tell a falsehood?

If you sent those Devils into two thousand hogs, thus causing their destruction, is it strange that the people, when they learned the fact, wished you to depart from their coasts?

Would any of our Western stock-growers welcome your visit now, if you should thus cause the destruction of their herds?

Were those Devils that you sent into the swine the same kind as the seven Devils which you extracted from Mary Magdalene?

What was the size of those seven Devils? Where did they enter, and where did they make their exit?

Is not all this business devilish strange, any way?

If your death was necessary to the happiness of the world, to the serenity and peace of your Father's mind; if you had to die, that one in ten, or one in a

hundred of poor doomed humanity might escape the suffering vouchsafed to all the rest, and by which grand process your Father is to be eternally glorified, did not Judas play a most commendable part?

If you had to be betrayed before you could be tried and crucified, was not the betrayal most essential?

If this is so, is it not wrong to despise Judas and hold him in detestation for the important work he performed?

Should he not rather be canonized by your Church as a saint of the first water?

How could a single being ever have found salvation, had there been no Judas?

Were not the Jewish priests who urged on your death and destruction, also important factors in the grand, divine scheme?

Were not the Roman soldiers who performed the closing part of the melo-drama, also worthy of special honor and distinction?

If you knew the results of your death, in redeeming a few doomed souls from the burning sea of sulphur, were of such vast importance, why did you so dread the special work you came to perform—the glorious death you came to die?

Was there ought of fear or faltering in your mind and courage when you so frantically reproached your Father for forsaking you?

Did you really think he had turned his back upon you, when you cried out so piteously, "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani" (My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me)?

Do you think you met death as bravely as did Socrates, Regulus, and numerous others of those brave heroes of olden times?

Should a God, in facing death, have less courage, less fortitude, and less equanimity than a man?

Did you know that your death would be the most glorious event in the whole history of the world?

Did you consider it any more for you to die than for any other individual to pass through the same ordeal?

Have not hundreds of thousands of men and women endured the pains of dissolution with far more fortitude than you did, though their sufferings were many times greater?

Let me ask you was the six hours during which you were suspended on the cross sufficient to take a man's life?

Did you absolutely die, or was it merely a case of fainting or swooning?

Did darkness cover the earth in consequence of your suspension upon the cross? Where was the sun during those three hours?

Was an earthquake also produced in consequence of your sufferings, and did the graves open and the dead walk out alive and mix again with their former companions?

If this extraordinary affair really occurred, why was Matthew the only one of your biographers to notice it, when mere trivial events were minutely related by all, and why did not some historian say something about it?

Did you keep the engagement you made at that time with the thief, that he should be that day with you in paradise?

Did you not, rather, take the opposite direction and spend the interim between your death and resurrection in the heart of the earth, according to your

prediction, or "in hell," as the Bible and the Apostles' Creed have it?

Did you not find the interior of the earth intensely hot, and a very uncomfortable place to be in?

If you were to pass three days in the heart of the earth did it not necessitate your traveling four thousand miles through dense, super-heated matter to get there?

Did you not find the great density of matter a great impediment to your travel?

If it was foretold by yourself and others that you should be three days in the heart of the earth, how could you make two nights and one day to fill the bill?

Are one day and two nights—aggregating at the most forty-eight hours—equal to three days or seventy-two hours?

Had the extreme heat of the interior of the earth anything to do with your returning before your time was up?

Did you not make excellent time to go four thousand miles to the heart of the earth and return in two nights and a day? Did you have much time to tarry there?

Let me ask you as to your ascension; did your physical body, the same that was laid in the sepulchre, ascend?

How high did your journey extend?

Did you not find the upper air extremely rare and intensely cold?

Can a physical body of flesh and blood exist for ten minutes at a distance of ten miles from the earth?

As the earth travels through space at a velocity of sixty-eight thousand miles an hour, does that fact

make any difference as to the direction, route or distance from earth to heaven ?

How is it that the four evangelists differ so widely in reference to your ascension, Matthew representing that you ascended from a mountain in Galilee, Mark stating that the ascension took place in a room where the eleven were at meat, Luke having it that you led your disciples out to Bethany, where you made your ascension, while John says nothing about your going up at all ?

How could such an important event in your career be so differently stated by the four ?

If either was right, were not the others wrong ?

Should not persons divinely inspired to write an account of such an extraordinary event be able to agree better in their versions ?

Would such kind of testimony have any value in an ordinary court of justice ?

Could a case of sheep stealing be established upon such evidence ?

Has the great similarity between many characters in the heathen mythologies and your own, ever attracted your attention ?

Are you not aware that the main facts, or what are claimed as facts, in your history appear to have been copied from similar legends pertaining to pre-existing individuals ?

Were not Buddha, Christna, Sakia, Zulis, Bacchus, Hercules, Alcides, Hesus and several others who lived, or were claimed to have lived, hundreds of years before, said to have been born of virgins and to have a god for a father ?

Should the world hold these personages in holy reverence because it is said of them, they were begotten

by gods and without their mothers losing their virginity ?

Have we not as much proof of this remarkable conception in each of these cases, as in your own, when yours only rests on a dream ?

Can the mere assertion, in either case, be sufficient to demand the belief of any sensible person ?

Was it not said of many of them, that they had disciples, to whom they taught excellent morals, and before whom they performed wonderful miracles ?

As the stories about them are much older than yours, would it be fair to suppose theirs were copied from yours ?

Were not Christna, Sakia, Thammuz, Wittoba, Iao, Hesus, Quexalcote, Quirinus, Prometheus, Thulis, Indra, Alcestos, Atys, Crite, Bali, Mithra and still others, all of whom lived centuries before your time, claimed to have been crucified as expiations for the sins of the world ?

Is not the proof that these personages lived and died in the manner represented, equally reliable and probable as in your case ?

Were not the believers in those ancient creeds and superstitions just as sincere, just as honest, and just as virtuous as those who believe in you ?

If your life and death upon the earth were a divine plan, devised in heaven, is it not a little singular that it should be so perfect a pattern after so many similar schemes previously gotten up by pagan religionists ?

Is God under the necessity of borrowing his plans from barbarians and ignorant heathens ?

Is not the striking similarities between the various mythologies the world has known, enough to cause

any thinking person to believe each system was borrowed from some similar system?

As Christianity is the youngest mythology of the lot, does it not seem probable that it is wholly a plagiarism?

When you uttered your best and grandest sentiments and morals, did you not know that the same had been uttered by many, hundreds of years earlier?

Do you not know it now?

Do you not know that what is called the "Golden Rule," was written much earlier and taught by Confucius, Pittacus, Socrates, Sextus, Isocrates, Hillel and others, who all lived before you?

Did you give any of these persons credit for any of the sentiments borrowed from them?

Were not the sentiments and morals taught by these old pagans, when the same as yours, equally as worthy of veneration and praise as when uttered by yourself?

Had not nearly every moral sentiment which was attributed to you been taught by others before you?

Is any given maxim or truth more true, or more beautiful for being spoken by a God or a demi-god?

Is not the same maxim when pronounced by a man just as true and as admirable as when from a God?

Is it just to transfer to any individual the credit and honor that has been earned by another?

Would it not be just as right that we should revere and honor Confucius, Pythagoras, Plato, and others for the excellent morals they have taught, as to give you all the praise for inculcating the same?

Have you observed the striking coincidences between the accounts of yourself and of Apollonious of Tyana, who was born before you, and did not die till after you did?

Are you not aware that he was said to have practiced great self-denial, to have given way his worldly possessions, to have spent his time in prayer and meditation; to have had a band of disciples whom he instructed in godliness and virtue; that he performed wonderful miracles, among which was raising the dead?

Are you conscious that the evidence of such a person having existed, is stronger than of your own, and that he traveled more extensively; that he lived to be an old man; that he established institutions of learning, and wrote many works that were handed down to posterity, and which is more than is true of you?

Had this character, by any fortunate circumstances —this demi-god, as he was esteemed to be—been taken as the Deity of Europe, or the head of its theology, would not his name have been as widely spread and as greatly revered as your own now is, and as justly?

Are you not aware that there is great uncertainty relative to the account of your career on the earth?

Do you not know that there is no proof of what are called the "four gospels" being in existence before the latter part of the second century; that none of the "early fathers" ever referred to them or mentioned them before Eusebius, who died in the fore-part of the third century?

With the knowledge we have of the many frauds that were committed by the early fathers, (and which they claim, too, were right and justifiable) is there not good grounds for doubting much of the story about yourself?

Were there not abundant chances at that time for

narratives to be gotten up and palmed off as genuine?

Were there not more than forty of such gospel stories gotten up by different individuals, with about as much truth in the one as in the others?

Is it not most probable that they were all wrong?

Are you not aware that the "four gospels" were not decided by the Church to be canonical till the fourth century, and that the other books of the New Testament were not taken into the Bible till the sixth century, and that the councils of contentious and fighting bishops and priests who assembled together to decide which and what should be the word of God, indulged in a great amount of quarreling upon the subject, and that in one contest over the matter, one bishop was kicked to death?

Is it strange, with these facts before us, that incredulous people honestly doubt the reliability and divinity of the book called the Bible?

Is it strange that in view of the great similiarity between your life and teachings and those of your predecessors, that many should doubt the probability of your existence?

Is it not a fact that all the rites, ceremonies, sacraments and usages of the creed called by your name are traceable directly back to pre-existent heathenism?

If this is true can there be any harm in the world being apprised of it, and understanding the facts as they are?

If Christianity in the dark ages of the world has served a purpose and assisted somewhat in helping man to emerge from the mists, falsities and superstitions of the primitive ages, does it follow that he should always continue to hug it to his bosom as truth?

In fact, is it not time the world discarded all myth-

ologies, man-made gods, mental crudities, absurdities, monstrosities, falsities, senseless creeds, superstitions and impositions?

Are not Truth, Science, Reason, Fraternal Love and Human Brotherhood vastly superior to all these?

Have not many of the propagandists of your religion been most bloody tyrants?

Was not Constantine, who murdered many of his own family, of this number?

Were not Charlemagne, Guy Lusignan, Torquemada, Alva, Philip II., John Calvin, Munzer, Claverhouse and very many others of the same category?

Has not the religion called after your name caused more bloodshed, more persecution, and more suffering than all the other religions of the world?

When the terrible slaughters, massacres and murders that have been committed in your name and in your cause, came to your knowledge, why did you not sometimes interpose and prevent those abominations?

Did you approve of that infernal institution called the "Holy Inquisition" which for five hundred years cursed the most populous portions of Europe, and before which hellish court were dragged at all hours of day and night, men and women, helpless, defenceless victims of priestly suspicion, avarice and malice; and where without evidence or means of defence they were slowly and cruelly tortured on racks, wheels and infernal machines of every possible conception, and where hot pinchers, pullies, thumb-screws, and the stake and fagot were used in thousands of instances?

Could you hear the cries and groans of these poor, helpless, tortured wretches, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after year, century

after century, and never feel a particle of sympathy for the sufferers, and never stretch forth your hand or to lift a finger to stay these most accursed wrongs?

Did you participate in the wars of the Crusades, when Christian Europe sent so many of her hardiest and bravest sons to wrest the Holy Land from the possession of the Infidel, which terrible wars lasted many years, and which caused the blood of scores of millions of human beings to saturate the earth?

Did you take part in other Christian wars by which unknown thousands and millions of hapless mortals were made to bite the dust?

Did you assist in the bloody persecutions which continued for centuries, that were directed against the sincere, well-disposed, but most unfortunate Vaudois, Waldenses, Albigenses, the Moors of Spain aad the Huguenots of France in which unparalleled cruelties of every conceivable character and the most profuse bloodshed took place?

If you did not aid in all this most infernal business transacted in your name, and by your Church, were you totally unconscious of it?

If you knew of it, and possessed the power to stay the red hand of blood, the heavy hand of oppression, or the strong hand of death in this long night of gloom and horror, why in the name of all that is good, all that is merciful, all that is high and holy, did not you or your all-powerful Father, once stretch forth your hands and stay these gigantic wrongs?

Could beneficence, mercy and love, sit benignantly, placidly and smilingly, on a golden throne, with all power at hand, and never raise an arm to check this mad monster savagism, intolerance, cruelty and death, which for so many long weary years, in

the name of the Christian religion, cursed the fairest portions of the earth

As a God or as a man, have you at any time dispensed to the human race the blessings which would have been of the greatest value to them

Would not natural truths, science, positive knowledge, and general education been of infinitely more value to the world, than the gift of your blood, or the relics of ancient paganism which you handed down, or which have been forced upon the world in your name ?

Did not your bishops, your priests, and your Church, a few centuries ago, do all in their power to hold back advancing light, intelligence, education and science ?

Were not the great discoverers of the truths of Nature, the noble emancipators of our race from the rule of ignorance and error, systematically and persistently hunted down and persecuted ?

Were not books, schools, and the printing press, time and time again denounced as of the Devil's agencies and opposed by Christian zealots to the extent of their power ?

Were not the masses purposely kept in ignorance and filled with superstitious fallacies by those who claimed to be their religious and Christian teachers and guides ?

Has not the advance which the world has made in education, science and general intelligence been made in spite of, and in opposition to Christian leaders and the Christian Church ?

Let me ask you right here, As God, or as man, are you, or were you ever acquainted with what are called the Sciences ?

Do you understand astronomy, chemistry, geology, biology, physiology, psychology, philology, mathematics, geometry, natural philosophy, and natural history in all its branches ?

Are these not all valuable and beneficial to the human race, and do they not help greatly in elevating man above the plane of barbarism, sensuality and ignorance ?

If you had known these, and had taught them to the world, would it not have been immensely better than to give your blood or to retail the mysticisms, parables, fables, beatitudes, and the impracticable injunctions which you presented to the world ?

Is it not better and wiser now, to follow in the light of science, reason and truth, than to adhere longer to any of the mythologies, superstitions and absurdities of the past ?

Has not man advanced as far as he has, by his own efforts, and is it not vastly better for him to depend upon his own powers, and to exercise them, rather than to look to gods, demi-gods, popes, bishops or priests ?

Have not these held the world back in ignorance, darkness and slavery for thousands of years ?

Has not your Church been signalized by the fallibility, vice and ignorance of many of its leaders and rulers ?

Have you been mindful of the villainous popes who have, from time to time, filled the papal chair, and who claimed to be your vicegerents and special favorites ?

Did you approve the conduct of Gregory the Great in the sixth century, who was an aspiring, unscrupulous despot, notorious for his profligacy, cruelty and

crimes, and who sanctioned one of the most bloody assassinations ever perpetrated ?

Was John XII. in the tenth century a favorite of yours, who was an unscrupulous libertine, gambler, debauchee and murderer, and who turned the Vatican into a brothel ?

How did you like John XXIII. in the fifteenth century, who was proved to have been guilty of seventy different kinds of crime, among which was sodomy, simony, rape, incest and murder, and with having illicit intercourse with over three hundred nuns ?

Do you not remember the delectable Alexander the Sixth in the fifteenth century who was guilty of incest, who seduced his own daughter, who was the father of many illegitimate children, and reeked in the most abominable crimes, and among the rest murder ?

Can you approve of the conduct of many of your modern clergymen who have claimed to be bright lights in your galaxy of stars ? What of Ephraim K. Avery, who was guilty of seduction and then the murder of his victim ?

How do you esteem Bishop Onderdonk, L. D. Huston, Henry Ward Beecher, John S. Glendenning, and thousands of other clergymen of like innocence and purity of character?

Have you not often had occasion to blush with shame and to redden with indignation at the base conduct of hundreds—yes, thousands of licentious hypocrites who try to pass themselves off as shepherds and leaders of your flock ?

Are not the ewe lambs specially exposed to their seductive wiles and artifices, their sensual plots and lascivious designs ?

Is it an indication of the purity and goodness of a cause when so many false lights and teachers are claiming to represent it?

Do not the clergymen, who loudly preach in your name, do quite as much to corrupt the morals of the world as they do to improve them?

Is not money, which in your book is called "filthy lucre—the root of all evil," the main incentive which induces your clergy to engage in your cause?

Would their great love for "souls" impel them to devote their talent and lives to the work if the PAY was not forthcoming?

Would not all the souls of men be suffered to go down to the eternal flames of burning sulphur if money was not liberally paid them to prevent such a sad catastrophe?

If there was no *paying* would there be much *preaching* and *praying?*

Can it comport with your sense of justice, honesty, and propriety to see these fat, lazy priests exact and obtain from the hard working Mickies who carry the hod, and the Bridgets who attend to the roasts and stews in the kitchen, a large share of their hard earnings for the saving of their souls?

Were not many of the old pagan priests and teachers models of virtue and purity compared with your clergymen of modern times?

Do you approve in general of the rich, expensive churches and cathedrals of these times?

Are the $250,000 churches and the $10,000 and $20,000 pastors anything like the times when you were upon earth and wandered listlessly about the fields, on the streets of villages and in the country highways?

Would it not be better if these magnificent church

places, where Mr. Moneybags, Mrs. Grundy and Mrs. Uppercrust meet to worship alike the unknown God, and the god of fashion, were all converted into industrial schools, hospitals for indigent widows, imbeciles, helpless cripples, the aged, the infirm and all unable to do for themselves?

Could not many of them be profitably changed into halls of science, where the truths of nature, the useful arts and the various avocations of life might be freely taught to all?

In view of the pride, arrogance, extravagance and hypocrisy of the modern clergy, would it be unsafe to expunge them all as a bad lot?

Would not the hundreds of thousands of priests throughout Christendom, who are entirely an unproducing class, and are living upon the labor and sweat of the toiling classes, be much more profitably employed in useful and productive occupations, thereby earning an honest living?

If the masses who, through ignorance and mistaken notions of virtue and morality, are now induced to support these hordes of pampered, licentious priests, and to build and furnish these costly temples and churches, could be relieved of the onerous expense of all this; and if the priests, who labor not at all in the avocations of industry, were forced to do so, would not the hours of toil for the weary and overworked millions be materially lessened, and would there not be more time for rest, recreation and mental improvement?

Do you like to see the priesthood of all your denominations calling upon their credulous dupes on every occasion for money, *money*, MONEY, and all for Jesus the Redeemer's sake?

Are not the fashionable churches of the day mere aristocratic associations for an exclusive class, where they can foster pride, arrogance and self-righteousness?

Are your moral maxims, your simple injunctions, and the lowly sentiments you inculcated upon earth, their guide and rule, or do they follow the fashions of the world, the vanities, the frivolties and gewgawry of dress, jewelry, fine silks and grand display?

Are members of the churches really any better than the average of non-professing people?

Will the mouthing of your sayings, the calling upon your name, the mere profession of devotion to your cause, avail them without doing the work you prescribed?

If a rich man cannot by any possibility enter the kingdom of heaven, what is to become of large numbers of those calling themselves Christians?

Are not the people of pagan and heathen countries to-day, more honest, more sincere, more simple-hearted, less designing, less hypocritical, less oppressive, less haughty and proud than a large portion of Christian professors?

Among all the nations of the earth, is there one nation where there is more stealing, more lying, more cheating, more fraud, more oppression upon the poor, and more cruelty, more heartlessness and more murder than in Christian lands?

Are not the precepts, maxims and moral sentiments you enjoined used by your professed followers, more as a cloak for their heartless deception and their self-righteousness, and as a weapon in their controversies with themselves and their antagonists, than as a rule of life or the governing principle of conduct?

Does not the worship of gold, of avarice, of power, of fashion, of respectability, of selfishness control their actions and inspire their lives far more than the meek and lowly doctrines you enunciated?

In a few words, is not Christianity, as known and practiced in the world, a cheat, a fraud, a costly and an expensive luxury which mankind could well spare, losing nothing by its rejection?

Finally, as you now view the field, the past, the present and the future, would it not, in your opinion, be better to wipe out from the face of the earth all priestcraft, superstition, sectarianism, falsehood, all the absurdities and monstrosities which have so preyed upon mankind, and to inaugurate an era of truth, reason, common sense, science, education, simplicity, fraternity and humanity; discarding false gods, base devils, useless saviors and degrading creeds, and to devote our time and attention to the improvement of this world and to the happiness of the human race?

Pardon me, Dear Sir, if I have been importunate or bold in my interrogatories. I feel that it is perfectly safe to inquire of you on all the subjects here touched upon, and upon which I wish information.

Should I be successful in obtaining answers from you, I will be encouraged to ask for more information. But as hinted at in the beginning of my letter, judging from the success I formerly met with, years ago, in the appeals I made to you in thousands of instances, I am prepared to not be disappointed if I receive no reply to this. I am respectfully, studiously, and hopefully A TRUTH SEEKER.

The Ills We Endure, their Cause and Cure.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Through extreme selfishness, undue greed, unrestrained avarice, obtuse ignorance, a mistaken theology, an excessive fondness for show and glitter, and a love of aristocracy and caste, this poor world of ours—and more immediately this fair country—is far less happy than it ought to be. It should be A HEAVEN, and *might be*, but man has made it almost A HELL.

Through a misdirected policy and a defective system of civilization, this land, which should be in every sense of the word a land of plenty and happiness, is with many a land of poverty and want. We see riches, affluence and splendor on one hand, and destitution, disease, wretchedness and starvation on the other.

It is mournful, in this great city of New York, to walk around in the aristocratic portions of the metropolis and view the magnificent palaces of the rich, where all is grandeur and ostentation, where so

much wealth is lavished for mere display and show, and then to turn our steps to the haunts—the dwelling places—of the poor, the toilers, the unfortunate ones of the community, who are forced to crowd into dingy attics, damp, noisome cellars, into badly-constructed and over-crowded tenement houses, often twenty, thirty and fifty families, even, in one badly constructed building; luxury, plenty and pride on the one hand, and desolation, discomfort and squalor on the other. The contrast is striking and even painful. In a large proportion of cases it is found that those who wearily toil the greatest number of hours in the twenty-four, sustain the greatest deprivations, and live on the plainest food. The extremes between wealth and poverty are probably greater in this city than in most parts of the country, but the contrasts are much the same all over the country. As it is here, it is nearly everywhere.

It is melancholy to realize, that, in this "land of plenty," where no individual should suffer for the want of food, that starvation absolutely takes place. There is far too much enforced idleness. It is not unfrequently the case in this one city, that there are from 50,000 to 100,000 persons who cannot find employment by which to secure the necessaries of life. It is a crying evil that a man seeking employment upon which the existence of himself and family depends is unable to find it! Our laws protect the rich man in every dollar of the millions he has ground out of the labor of the toiling masses, and it is due to the poor man as well, that he has equal protection. His labor is his capital, and this should be guaranteed him as really as the rich man with his gold and his ill-gotten gains.

There is a serious defect in the Christian civilization of our times. It has sadly failed to meet the wants of the race, and clearly has not brought happiness and plenty to the masses. A large proportion of the people of this country, of unequaled advantages, are to-day groaning under poverty, deprivation, destitution and want. It is not as it should be. With the productiveness of our soil, with the increased knowledge that has been acquired in the various avocations and the varied conditions of life, all ought to have plenty, all ought to be happy. If the labor and the wealth were fairly apportioned, there would be none excessively rich; none excessively poor. Six hours of labor in twenty-four would be sufficient to afford a comfortable living for all, and none would need to famish with hunger.

The selfishness of our kind, the faults of our religion, and the aristocracies we have to support, are chargeable with a great share of the evils under which we groan. If we could exchange seventy-five per cent. of the selfishness we cherish in our breasts, and let a true feeling of humanity, a love of our race fill its place; or, if we could cause our selfishness to become so enlightened as to show us that the best interests of individuals is most promoted by the well-being and prosperity of the masses, it would be vastly better for all concerned.

In a family of ten children, where the larger proportion are healthy and capable of getting along in the world; if a brother or sister from ill-health, imbecility or want of capacity, evinces an inability to grapple with the trials and difficulties of life, the kind-hearted brothers and sisters who are more fortunate, will take an interest in them, will aid them, will help

them along, and will divide with them, if necessary. This is the sentiment that should actuate all of us. We are one large family. All humanity are our brothers and sisters. We should not try to pull each other down, nor to rise upon others' misfortunes and inabilities; but it should be the duty and the pleasure of all to make those around them prosperous, contented and happy. *Excessive selfishness is the bane of our existence.*

The aristocracies that have to be sustained are oppressive and expensive. First, perhaps, in this country, comes the aristocracy of wealth. Gold, and the love of it, rules the country. The capitalist wields an influence and power not easily computed. One excessively wealthy man, like a Vanderbilt, a Stewart a Scott is able to control and oppress thousands of his equally deserving, but less fortunate fellow-beings. The rule of wealth and capital is a most fearful despotism which the world would be happy in suppressing. The tendency is for this gigantic evil to increase, and it is doing so in geometrical progression. The rich men to-day are vastly richer than twenty-five and fifty years ago, while the poor are much poorer, and vastly more numerous.

If this state of things continues but a very few decades longer, the rich will become monied lords, comparatively few in number, while the millions will be abject slaves, menials and dependents. This is upon the supposition that the masses do not inform themselve of their rights and take the means of redress into their own hands.

The aristocracy of knowledge is not so much to be dreaded, but still it exists to a very great extent. The number of educated, well-informed people are in far

too small a minority, and their power is by no means inconsiderable. Ignorance still fills the land, and though a large majority know how to read and write, the general information that should, like the rays of light, overspread the land, is, unhappily, fearfully deficient. It is, however, a cheering indication that knowledge is increasing. With each succeeding generation it is hoped that some gain in this direction is made upon the preceding generation. But much remains yet to be done. The world needs a great deal more of light, to dispel the mass of existing ignorance and error. A happy fact in this direction is, that any person and every person can acquire as much knowledge as he pleases without impoverishing another or lessening the grand aggregate.

The aristocracy of the *Priesthood* is indeed a fearful one—an aristocracy that rules the world by working upon the fears and the ignorance of its dupes, and the more dangerous because of its insidious, presumptious, arrogant, and exacting character. It claims a delegated power from a king in heaven, and it has for thousands of years ruled the world with a rod of iron, and with fire and the sword. Millions of treasure have been wrung from ignorant and confiding dupes by this greedy, oppressive aristocracy, and though they have made pompous claims to morality, they have doubtless been the greatest curse the earth has known.

An eloquent and distinguished teacher in the Liberal ranks has given utterance to this sentiment: "There can be but little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven;" and he might have added: *and but little little liberty and independence while men sustain a licentious, pampered, polluting priesthood!*

An approximate estimate of the expense of this

theological aristocracy can be arrived at when we take into consideration that in Christendom there are 600,000 priests that are wholly non-producers and who live solely upon the labors of others, laying their exactions upon the toiling masses with a heavy, merciless hand. In our own country there are sixty thousand clergymen, and scarcely one in the entire number do as much as to grow a hill of beans. Their salaries vary from $500 and $1000 to $10.000 and $20.000. There are also sixty thousand churches to be kept up, many of these temples to the unknown God in the cities of our land, costing from $50,000 to $500,000 each, and some even more. Many of these churches are supplied with expensive organs, and high-salaried choirs are employed. The Christian religion costs this country $200,000,000 annually and the question naturally arises, *are the returns in proportion to the cost?* Truth answers *no*, NO, NO! It is definitely settled that the religion alluded to does not increase morality where it prevails. In no part of the world is there so much cheating, lying, stealing, robbing, killing, grinding the face of the poor, trampling upon the helpless and needy, as in Christian lands. Christian despots, Christian lords, Christian millionaires, Christian capitalists, are more oppressive, more cruel, more exacting than any others in the world.

Reader, think for a moment how it is. The sixty thousand clergymen of this country and their families are supported in idleness by the laboring classes; for all the rich, all the idle, all the indolent, and all the aristocrats live and flourish by the muscle and sweat of the toiling millions. Every drone, every non-producer, every one who adds nothing to the wealth and

products of the world are supported and fed by those who labor. Suppose every priest, every clergyman who now feeds upon the best the earth produces, but without lifting a finger towards producing it, suppose by the power of public sentiment or other controlling influence they were themselves compelled to become producers—if by the labor of their hands they were made to feed themselves and their families, just think what a burden would be taken off the shoulders of the weary toilers. If the clerical aristocracy, if the monied aristocracy, if all these drones and idlers were forced to feed themselves, to support themselves and to clothe themselves, what a relief it would be to the working men and women who not only are now forced to feed themselves, but all the drones in the great human hive. If the labor of the world could be equally apportioned, as we observed, six hours of toil in the twenty-four would be sufficient to sustain all in comfort and plenty, and the remaining eighteen hours could be passed in recreation, mental improvement and rest.

It is fortunate that the remedy for the ills we endure is mainly in our own hands. What we need is the intelligence, the humanity, the love of our fellows, and the unselfishness to co-operate and work for the general good, instead of personal aggrandizement, and excessive wealth. The laboring masses must learn to co-operate with intelligence and unselfishness. It is impossible to limit the great good that can be accomplished by it. With the ballot, with the muscle, with the habits of industry, and with the resolution and perseverance of the working men and women the greatest results can be produced. The laboring classes have in their own hands the making of officers and

and law-makers, and consequently the laws. If they will work together with due intelligence they can compel the conditions as they please.

If certain laws are desirable to be enacted, we have the power to elect the men to enact them. If capitalists are bearing down upon the working poor, let the laboring class bring their power and influence to bear, and command the terms. If the owners of mills and factories, as at Fall River, are oppressive and unreasonable, let one hundred and fifty men, more or less, of the operatives work in a united interest putting in $100 apiece, or what they are able to do, and inaugurate a business, on a moderate scale, if necessary, and be their own masters. An honest and practical co-operation in cases of this kind can hardly prove unsuccessful, and will apply to nearly all the avocations of life—in buying for consumption and in selling the products of labor.

Co-operation is successful in many parts of Europe and is becoming somewhat so here; and in this direction lies the remedy for many of the ills endured by the working millions. To make it a success a fraternal feeling, an enlightened intellect, faithful honesty and practical effort are the essentials.

Our attention has recently been attracted to a co-operative movement at Springfield, Vt., known as "The Industrial Works," that furnishes all its members with constant work at fair wages and a pleasant home at small cost, and which is meeting with a success so marked as to attract the attention of many thinking people. The members of this association are said to be young people who are willing to rid themselves of bad habits, work steadily, dress econom-

ically, and save a portion of their wages. No others are taken.

The men who join are required to furnish a small amount of capital, and to save one fourth of their wages which must be invested in the capital stock of the company. Women are not required to put in capital, but to save one sixth of their wages and to invest it in the business. Those who do not comply with the requirements of the association are expelled, and those who wish to leave can do so at any time and can withdraw their capital by giving a few months notice. The wages paid to each member is fixed by a board of directors and is apportioned to skill and ability.

They have a large dwelling or home, where the members live and enjoy many privileges and comforts not attainable by the poor in the ordinary course of life, whether in small families or boarding-houses. All pay a moderate price for board from their wages.

They have two new factory buildings and a good water privilege and considerable machinery; and are engaged in the manufacture of toy and house-furnishing goods, for which ready sale is found.

They commenced business a year ago with five hands, and are now working forty-five. Their sales for last month were over $3,000. Their pay-roll for the month was over $1,200, and the saving of wages which was added to the capital of the company was more than $300. The average amount saved from the wages of each man in a year is $150, and of each woman, $50. Many of the members have saved more than this amount, but this is all that is required of them. The aggregate amount saved by the present

company will be about $5,000 for the year. By continuing in this course for a few years, the capital of the association must become large, and the earning of each member a respectable and comfortable competency.

Such a co-operation of industrious, honest and intelligent individuals, is certainly practical and may be very successful. It is a subject upon which we shall have more to say.

The success which has attended the combined operations of the societies of "Shakers," and the "Oneida Community," establish the fact, that not only in union is there strength, but that in union and co-operation is there sociality, pleasure and profit.

There are various ways in which the principle of co-operation can be applied. If it is not desirable in all cases to enter into companies in the manner just indicated, it can at least be carried out in the election of officers, and in the enactment of desirable laws. The laboring men of this country may be the rulers of this country if they choose to be so. They have only to act in concert and with discretion, to accomplish anything they wish. We urge them to an unselfish humanitarianism, or in other words, an enlightened self-interest. Let the great truth be always borne in mind, *that by promoting the general welfare and happiness, we most effectually promote our own.* Let this principle be acted upon and carried out in all the affairs of life, and vastly more can be accomplished for the happiness and good of the race, than the Church, religion, and all the priests have effected, for thousands of years.

We would briefly indicate, just here, the course, that to us seems feasible for employing the thousands

who are unable to find employment themselves; that the municipalities, the State, or organized companies for the purpose, establish a series of manufactories and industrial establishments, where any person can find employment, at any time. Let fifty or seventy-five per cent of the wages earned from week to week be paid, the balance to stand for six months to be then paid, or to be invested in the capital of the company for the benefit of the individual. This would be vastly better than that unemployed thousands should be left to crowd our cities and indulge in crime. A reasonable amount of capital invested in this way, would be vastly better than establishing soup houses and alms-houses; and an immense saving would thereby be effected in cost of trials and courts of justice for the punishment of criminals. Labor, even, at moderate pay, is a blessing to those wanting bread.

Our prisons should also be made industrial institutions, and every person unwilling to work and who has no visible means of livelihood, should be arrested and made to work for no remuneration save plain board.

In a word, employment, at moderate wages, should be furnished all who want it, and those who will not work should be made to. This course would end most of the tramps, idleness, and crime that now abound, and the average hours of toil would be lessened for all classes. Now the workers have to support all the idlers. If the idlers were also compelled to work, the laborers would assuredly have to devote fewer hours to toil.

The insatiable and insane desire for immense wealth, which is one of the great evils of our time,

should be counteracted by excessive taxation upon the excessively rich. No man has ever honestly earned a million dollars, and he really has no right to it. Wealth is the common property of the world, and a few individuals have no right to engross it all. We say then, *tax the immensely rich, heavily,* and in a ratio increasing with their wealth. Say on $50,000, one per cent. ; 100,000, two per cent. ; $500,000 five per cent. ; $100,000,000 and over, ten per cent., or at all events, such a rate of taxation as will render excessive wealth undesirable, thus leaving it to flow in the usual business currents, and attainable in a moderate degree by the masses.

Large land-owners should be treated in a similar way. No man has a natural, or just right to more land than he can use, and the excess above this quantity should be so heavily taxed that he would be glad to part with it and to throw it into the market, where men of moderate means can obtain it.

The people have these reforms within their power, if they will but intelligently use the power they possess.

Among the crying evils of our time, is the spirit of extravagance and the disposition to contract indebtedness. It begins with the individual farmer, mechanic and merchant; it is fearfully apparent in corporations, cities and municipalities; it is an evil with which every State is more or less troubled; and finally our National Government is sadly involved in the same evil. And so it is with nearly all the governments and nations of the world. All are loaded down with a weight of debt, which, like an incubus, hangs heavily upon their necks. Generations must pass away before this gigantic evil can be fully re-

moved; and unless reformatory measures are adopted, the wrong will be more aggravated and still more widely extended.

This city alone has an onerous debt of $150,000,000 in round numbers, saddled upon it, and our neighboring city of Brooklyn has nearly $50,000,000 weighing her down; and in a similar manner nearly every city and incorporated town in the country has, through the criminal operations and mismanagement of local rings, and designing, intriguing parties, loaded themselves heavily with debt. Many counties and townships, nearly all railroad companies and similar corporations are in the same predicament. The mania to run in debt has been general, and the evil has become wide-spread.

To pay the interest upon this immense indebtedness is a heavy burden upon the people, even if the evil can be stayed where it is; and is a burden which the laboring classes have to carry. The dishonesty and thieving with which much of this has been accomplished, is appalling, and assuredly is enough to shake confidence in humanity to its very center. When is it to end, and where is the great remedy? Is there a hope of escape from this burden, or must we ever submit to it without relief?

Closely allied with this evil is the still greater one of dishonesty, fraud, and thieving in public servants, which has rapidly increased within the last twenty-five years. It pervades all grades and classes of officials, with very few exceptions, from city policemen and ward-officers to the legislators of States and to Congressmen, Senators, Cabinet officers, and even the Executive himself, whose salary, like the salaries of many other high officials, has been doubled,

and who, from a very poor man, has become, in a few years, a millionaire. Almost every public officer seeks places of trust to avail himself of the facilities which the position affords him to plunder and steal from the public purse, and thereby, instead of serving the best interests of the public, to increase his own wealth—his own dishonest gains. To such an extent has this mammoth grievance been carried, that it has become almost a dishonor to hold official positions in the nation. If a man's name is mentioned who has filled the office of Indian Agent, Congressman, a Secretaryship, or many other places of public trust, the question at once presents itself to the mind, has not that man, like all the rest of his compeers, filled his own pockets from the public treasury? It is the saddest aspect of modern civilization, that gross dishonesty is greatly on the increase, and that promotion to office is a most prolific source of theft, and is the channel in which it largely fattens at the public expense.

All this is becoming a grave question; how much has our system of theology to do with all this corruption and crime? How much is the faith which teaches the believer that he secures a seat in heaven—not by his own merits and good deeds, but by the righteousness of another individual, responsible for the code of morals that now rules the land? Is it calculated to inaugurate and encourage honesty, to teach people that they can secure the most valuable riches, the highest degrees of happiness of which the mind is capable of conceiving, without any exertions of their own, but by the labors and sufferings of another?

Is it natural that people should pursue an honest

course through life, when they are taught from their mothers' knees, in the Sunday-school, and at every church they attend during childhood, youth and mature age, that however black their crimes, however base their sins, however dishonest or iniquitious their conduct may be, that it can all be blotted out; that their record can be made spotless and clean; that their sins, though as red as scarlet, can be made as white as wool; that they can be washed in the blood of an innocent lamb and be rendered immaculate, pure and spotless; that however great the score of indebtedness that may be posted up against them in the great ledger, that a kind-hearted individual will settle it all, if they will simply believe in him—that "*Jesus will pay it all*"?

There can be no doubt that the sentiments and morals taught to children and youth, have a great influence in forming character and in establishing a rule by which to square the conduct of life. It is undeniable that the religious belief of a people has much to do in controlling their actions and in establishing their character and habits. Can it be expected that a nation can ever be honest, moral and truthful, when they are instructed from infancy, that in securing happiness, that in laying up treasures in heaven, morality and good actions count as nothing; that in fact they are often a hindrance to happiness, and that however great an amount of moral and spiritual indebtedness a person may pile up, Jesus stands ready and willing to pay the entire score.

This system of religion, this plan of salvation, is well calculated for moral bankrupts and those who want to eat well, and dress well, at somebody else's expense and upon the result of the labors of

others. This getting to heaven by taking the benefit of the bankrupt act, inevitably makes moral delinquents and dishonest individuals of most of those who embrace the doctrine.

It is a far better religion, far more moral and more truthful, to inculcate in the minds of the young, and people of all ages, the great moral maxims that our happiness and peace of mind depend upon our conduct; that justification, like happiness, cannot be bought nor borrowed, nor stolen; that neither the blood of a lamb nor a belief in any blood, can avail in washing away the effects of wrong doing; that every act committed, whether good or bad, either adds to, or diminishes our happiness and peace of mind; that every individual is responsible for his own conduct; that the virtues, good deeds and good qualities of one person, cannot be transmitted to another; that the effects of a crime or a wrong action, can no more be removed by forgiveness, than can the effects of a burn, a broken limb or a dose of poison; that the better way to avoid the effects of misdeeds, is not to commit them; and that the safest plan to secure a competence, or to ensure peace of mind and happiness, is to work industriously, live honestly, and to do wrong to no man.

The gods have little use for our services, our devotions, our adulations or our praises. They are so far removed from us, they are so uncertain a quantity that it is not in our power to aid them nor to injure them. It *is* within our power to aid or injure ourselves and our fellow-beings around us. In view of these impregnable truths, should the actions of man be governed?

Common honesty is far too rare a commodity in this advanced nineteenth century. The great bulk of

the community are trying to gain an advantage over their neighbors, and so far as in their power to get something for nothing. The actions of men are far too much influenced by selfish motives, and there is not regard enough felt for the happiness and welfare of neighbors, friends and strangers.

If we will do away with all dishonest gods, all unjust devils, all false systems of theology, and all blind and erroneous creeds; if we will square our daily actions by the principles of honor, honesty and uprightness; if we will make it a point to see how much we can add to the happiness of those around us; if we will resolve to dispense with all silly gew-gaws, all the trappings of vanity; if we will strive for the beautiful and the useful; if we will be content with a moderate amount of wealth; if we will be willing to dispense with luxuries; if we will at all times realize the truth that our own happiness is increased by adding to the happiness of others, we will do very much towards making this a brighter, an honester and a happier world, and will need no blood of a god, nor a son of a god, to make us happy now, or in the future.

Let us cherish the good qualities of our natures and check and curb those of an opposite character. There is scarcely a human being—however low and depraved—but what has many good qualities in his organization. It should be the duty of this life to cultivate and increase the good, and root out and lessen the opposite.

The finest fruits, the choicest grains, the most beautiful flowers, do not grow spontaneously on every hand, but have to be cultivated with care. The weeds, the thistles, the nettles, and the poisonous

plants, have to be uprooted and removed. So it is with personal qualities and individual characteristics. Some are less useful and less to be admired than others. One class needs culture and care, the other should be destroyed. Let us apply the same tactics and practices in one field that we do in another, and we can succeed in making this world about as pleasant and happy as we wish. We will not need to wait till we die before we go to heaven, for we can get up one here, on our own account, and if there is a continued existence after this life, we will be far better prepared for it than by neglecting our own faults and depending upon the virtues of another.

If every man will make himself honest, we will soon have an honest community. If we will search diligently and select honest men only, to fill public offices and to be law-makers; if we will co-operate together in insisting upon such reforms as our country requires; if we will firmly resolve to have fewer officers, and to pay them less exorbitant salaries; if crime and dishonesty can be more effectually punished; if we will attach to wealth and its acquisition no value any farther than that it secures to us the comforts of life and the absence of suffering and want; if we render it impossible for any individual to accumulate, by fraud, dishonesty or otherwise, an undue portion of wealth, whether in money or land; if we will make the rich pay the burdens of the government, if labor can be provided for all: if none are suffered to be idle and non-producers; we may have a country truly flourishing in comfort, prosperity and hap piness.

Among the excesses and perversions which have grown up with modern Christian civilization, is that connected with the "dispensation of justice." One has but to notice the deviousness, the delays, the uncertainties and the costliness attending what are called our "Courts of Justice," to become impressed with the clumsiness, the tediousness and the dissatisfactoriness of the whole system. He almost inevitably comes to the conclusion, that *justice* is a misnomer—that the temples erected in every county of our land, and ostensibly dedicated to the blind goddess, are expensive institutions, dedicated rather to the genius of *injustice*, which, whether blind or not, seems wofully lacking in honesty and good sense.

To step into one of these temples when the ceremonies are in full operation—say when the docket is being called, and the case of Brown *versus* Jones, and Smith *versus* Robinson, and a long calendar of others are being called, and to see the array of learned and talented lawyers, with their green bags and large parcels of documents, answering, as certain cases are reached, some of which have been hanging in court for months, and sometimes for years; and to notice the excuses, the plausible subterfuges, and the ingenious artifices that are exercised, on one side or the other to delay, or stave off a trial; and to hear the great diversity of excuses and arguments that are offered, on the one side or the other, to prevent what they profess to be pursuing, one is compelled to decide that the august Judge, the troop of attorneys, and the entire officials of the court, instead of jointly aiming to speedily procure justice for the unfortunate clients, are using their ingenuity and finesse in trying

"how not to do it." The uncertainty and interminableness of the "law's delay" are proverbial.

It was recently our misfortune to be elected to serve upon the jury, and while we were waiting to present to the judge the necessity of our attending to our own business, and to ask him to excuse us, we had time enough to realize how cumbrous, indirect, tardy and expensive our legal poceedings are.

Legal justice is a luxury that a poor man, or one in moderate circumstances, cannot indulge in. It is a privilege attainable only by those who are fortunate enough to have plenty of money. Lawyers who have spent their lives in studying the intricacies of Coke, Blackstone, and Kent, who are familiar with English law and our own revised and re-revised statutes—have become a necessity to our life and civilization, and they are employed at extravagant fees in the settlement of the thousands of difficulties that arise in the transfer of property, the operations of commerce, the transactions of business and in the endless intricacies of life, which could all be settled more speedily, direct, satisfactory and by a vastly more economical process.

Reader, have you ever stopped to think what a great number of lawyers, clerks, constables, sheriffs, and judges are being retained and munificently supported, in our complicated social organization for the settlement of quarrels and "little difficulties," many of which if we were more actuated by the spirit of fraternity and less by selfishness and greed, might greatly be avoided? In the multitudinous contentions about money and property that are hanging from month to month, and from year to year in our courts of "justice," and our courts of "equity," a great

portion of them could be amicably settled, or might never had an existence if a spirit of concession and unselfishness was cultivated, instead of this constant disposition to obtain an advantage over every one we come in contact with. Our excessive desire to "make money," and to make it, too, at the expense of others causes a great amount of trouble and annoyance. If we could only learn to view our fellow beings around us and everywhere, as really our brothers and sisters, that we all belong to the same family, that our happiness is increased and intensified by promoting their happiness and welfare; if we could only realize that the highest type of deity existing in the Universe is personated in the men and women who constitute the communities in which we live, and that we are a part of the same, it would become our desire to promote the happiness of those around us to the extent of our ability, and we would learn the great truth, that *the greatest happiness consists in making others happy.* As, however, in the struggle for existence and wealth as existing in our present forms of society, man is necessarily extremely selfish and contentious, and as differences will inevitably arise; let us adopt a readier and a cheaper mode of settling them.

In the ffrst place, every person should know more about the laws of his country and the laws of equity between man and man, so as to obviate the necessity of so great a number of non-producing lawyers, who, in this country annually require many millions of dollars earned by the toil of the laboring masses for doing for us and telling us what each man ought to know for himself, and which he easily could know, if a tithe of the time was devoted in that direction that is now occupied in learning and listening to the

antiquated theologies and mythologies, fictions and fables that go to make up our systems of religion. Every man should be an intelligent lawyer, and if the time that is spent in listening to the dogmas of an angry God, malicious, insinuating devils, the great necessity of blood to wash away the stains of sin, and all kindred themes, every man might know enough about our law to draw his own contracts and deeds, and to attend to nearly all the legal business necessity requires.

For the settlement of such difficulties and differences as cannot otherwise be amicably arranged, let ARBITRATION be employed. It is much simpler, much readier, much less expensive and much more conducive to justice and right. If courts of arbitration were established to meet the public necessity, in which the arbiter or judge should preside, each litigant choosing an umpire for himself, (except in cases of evident fraud and collusion, when the umpire, one or both, should be chosen by the arbiter) justice would be vastly cheaper than now, enabling poor men to enjoy its luxuries, requiring far less time, employing a much smaller number of men, and not one-fourth part of the "machinery" and complication of the present mode. Each litigant could make his own statement, corroborated with such proof as he could adduce—the witnesses to be examined by the arbitrators—thus dispensing with the immense number of legal gentlemen that now live upon the ignorance and contentions of mankind, and allow them to engage in more productive employment. There are near four thousand lawyers in this city, and other towns and cities are supplied in about

the same proportion. In the entire country there are about 150,000.

If the jury system is retained, it would seem advisable to reduce the number of jurors. Numbers do not increase the chances for a correct decision. Forty would be more objectionable than twelve; and twelve more than three. Our legal processes greatly need simplifying and cheapening; they are far too intricate and costly.

The favoritism and partiality that is manifested in our criminal Courts, are most reprehensible. It has almost passed into a proverb that a rich man, or a rich man's son can hardly be convicted of a capital crime. The cunning of scheming lawyers is brought into play, and by subterfuge and sharp practice of various kinds, the guilty, if rich or from an influential family, is seldom brought to justice; while for a poor and friendless man, there is little chance for escape. This is one of the many ways in which the corruptions arising from the accumulation of wealth is too often manifested and calls for radical reform. Let the people demand stern and equal justice in all cases, until favoritism and partiality are expelled from our Courts, and when a rich man and a poor man can stand upon a level.

In connection with the legal profession the medical fraternity should not be neglected. It must be admitted. they often serve a very important purpose and by many are regarded as indispensible. They, too, are an unproducing class, and if mankind were as well informed in the laws of health as they should be, this class could be largely dispensed with. If men learned less of theology and more of physiology; less of dogmas and more of the laws of hygiene, the major

portion of M.D.s could be spared, and the legions of empirics, charlatans and pretenders, who now thrive upon the ignorance and credulity of the masses, could be driven to pursue honest occupations.

The more the human family becomes conscious of the important facts that healthy food in due quantities, pure air, pure water, a plenty of sunshine, with a proper amount of exercise in the open air are more conducive to robust health than drugs and medicines of any kind, and that air, water, sunlight, regimen, with animal magnetism, are better remedies for disease, the more and more will drugs go out of use, and the less will physicians be regarded as a necessity, until mineral drugs and poisons will be deemed as worse than useless. When this day arrives, when temperance and Nature's true remedies are applied, pallid faces, broken constitutions, shattered nervous systems, dyspepsia, consumption, scrofula, syphilis, paralysis, softening of the brain and a large class of other diseases will be far less prevalent than now, and the natural birth-right of all—sound health—will be the rule. Disease is not the natural heritage of earth's children; nor is it sent by a wise and inscrutable, kind or *un*kind Providence. It has come from the excesses and wrong practices of man, and these perverted conditions have been greatly aggravated by an undue use of medicines and poisons, which, as we said, the race will ultimately learn to dispense with.

Modern civilization, and its pernicious habits, have done much towards making mankind effeminate and unhealthy, Diseases and maladies have been increased and aggravated by indigestible food, rich dishes, feasting, gluttony, late hours, bibulousness, too free use of fermented and distilled intoxicants, excessive

indulgence in sexual pleasures, over-taxing and overworking the brain and the physical organization have caused unnumbered thousands of diseased constitutions and impaired physical and mental powers, and these have been transmitted from parents to children and aggravated and intensified—all parties, nearly, abusing themselves from day to day, and from year to year, through life, until it is a marvel how the race possesses so much health as it has to-day.

A large proportion of us have been doing thousands of things directly calculated to impair our health and happiness and to shorten our lives. This is all wrong—a crime against Nature, a crime against humanity, a crime against ourselves, a fearful crime against posterity. A reformation must be effected in this direc tion or humanity will fall short of filling its mission and of reaching the high point of perfection within its power. Medication, drugs and poisons are not the true remedies. Nature provides a far better mode of treatment and spreads in profusion everywhere the means for far better conditions. But her laws must not be violated—it cannot be done with impunity. Results will enevitably follow causes and no man can change this law. If we violate nature, if we indulge habits and practices that oxer-tax our physical powers and induce a diseased condition, impair our health, shorten our days, we absolutely commit *murder*—and often knowingly—not only upon ourselves; but upon our unfortunate posterity that are compelled to inherit the seeds of disease and wretchedness we have planted and hand down to them. This fearful legacy should no longer be regarded as a gift from an all-wise and all-kind Father, a dispensation of an over-ruling Providence, but as the direct effects of

intemperance in various directions, and in abusing the powers and functions of our natures.

The world has much to learn in connection with the subjects here touched upon, and much to gain on the score of moderation and self-denial. The greatest amount of happiness is not secured by yielding thoughtlessly to appetite and passion, or in giving the leading strings to our lower animal incentives, which should be controlled by the intellect—the reasoning power. We must learn to "say NO" when lured to commit any excess; any infraction of the laws of our being. Health and happiness are far more important to us than momentary pleasure, or the indulgence of animal passions. Let us learn to control the lower impulses, and pursue the course that will result in health, peace of mind, long life, and consequent happiness.

Upon the subject of the propagation of the race, the necessary conditions to parent-hood as well as with the social conditions of man, a great deal should be said that we have not room for in this article. We are fearfully in the dark upon this most important subject, and are daily and hourly committing crimes of which we should not be guilty. The begetting of offspring and the laws which control it, are not understood as they should be. Young men and women too often form unions that are ill-advised and physically uncongenial in temperament and adaptability. Passion is too often the governing impulse, and children are too often begotten and brought into the world which would be far better to never have existed. There is far too much ignorance and thoughtlessness upon this subject. Unions are formed that never should have been effected; and a sickly, feeble,

doomed posterity is the result. When it is realized what a lack of knowledge exists upon this subject it is not strange there are so many puny, sickly, imbecile, malformed and idiotic children brought into existence to be a curse to themselves and to those who come after them. There is a science closely connected with this vital subject which has yet largely to be learned. Unions between the sexes must be effected upon scientific principles ; the habits of married people must be governed by Nature's laws ; excesses and wrongs must be avoided if a healthy progeny is to be insured.

The begetting of offspring—the transmission of the race—is the most important avocation in which human beings can engage in ; but upon which there is far too much ignorance. The conditions for a healthy progeny should always be provided for, and to bring healthy, well-developed children into the world, should be regarded as the proudest acts of our lives.

Fœticide, or infant-murder, is one of the most heinous crimes of modern times, and is fearfully on the increase ; but it is difficult to decide, which is the most to be deprecated ; that monstrous wrong, or the bringing into existence a diseased, miserable, sickly offspring. Let there be a general disposition to obtain more knowledge upon these subjects. May the time come when it can no longer be said in truth, that " among the millions of children which are brought into the world, scarcely one is begotten upon strictly scientific principles."

With a due observance of the laws of our being, in the matter of health, longevity, physical and mental vigor, the human race is susceptible of being greatly

improved. In this direction, great additional light is needed. Our race is as susceptible of improvements, as the races of any of the animals below us. If it is found profitable to spend time, care and expense, in improving the breeds of horses, cattle, sheep and swine, is it not vastly more important to have a care for securing a vigorous, healthful, long-lived human progeny ?

The great evil of intemperance is ever exciting the serious apprehensions of the thoughtful, and how to remove it is one of the principal problems of our time. It is unquestionably the immediate cause of a very large share of the crimes committed among us. A large proportion of the cases of assault and battery, manslaughter, homicide and murder that are brought into our courts, are found to have their origin in the free use of alcoholic liquors. It is mournful, too, to realize the fact that a very great percentage of the crimes our courts are called to investigate are committed by young men. Inexperienced as they are, they are easily led astray, and if they indulge in the maddening bowl their reason is dethroned, their self-control has departed and they are left to commit the greatest follies and the most henious crimes.

There is far too much license in the sale of intoxicating liquors and although it may be thought to be an infringement upon personal rights and liberties to prohibit by law the liquor traffic it is a very grave question whether society does not possess the right to protect itself and especially the rising generation against the fell destroyer of peace, health, prosperity and life, though it may militate somewhat against personal rights. No man has the right to endanger the welfare of the community by turning a wild beast

or a mad dog loose into the public streets. No man has a rlght to spread a poisonous malaria or to generate baleful gases to injure those around him. Neither should a liquor-dealer be allowed the right to deal out to the young, to the middle-aged or to the aged, a virulent poison, that maddens the brain, destroys the reason and changes men into incendiaries, homicides and murderers, and all for the sake of a little paltry gain.

Society assuredly possesses the right to protect itself against all deadly foes; but if it is not practicable to close liquor selling establishments let them be held rigidly accountable for the evils they cause, and let them be heavily fined. Let liquor sellers be held responsible for the injury they do If they sell to a father, husband, brother or son, and thus make criminals or insane men, let them be amenable for the crimes and injuries committed in consequence of the maddening poisons sold. Let fines and penalties be made so heavy upon those who so seriously injure society—the great family of humanity—that the wrong be not continued; that the destroyer of happiness and prosperity will gladly resort to an honest and commendable means of livelihood. This principle has been partially enforced in some parts of our country but not with the rigidness that the offense demands.

Shall society always sanction the sufferance and protection of a class of men who are constantly poluting the morals of the young, who are daily inciting the erring to crime, who are taking from the laboring man the hard earnings needed by his family, and who are the direct authors of penury, wretchedness and despair? It is to be hoped not.

Can a worse hell be imagined than the one the liquor traffic has created among us? The great numbers of naturally brilliant and promising young men who have been ruined by alcohol; the immense number of families that have been made desolate and homeless, the blighted lives and broken hearts it has caused; the homicides, suicides and other crimes it has instigated, is an appalling array if but seen in half its magnitude and deformity. Society certainly possesses the inherent right to abate this terrible wrong, and it is a participator in the consequent guilt if it refuses to exercise this right.

The use of opium is also rapidly becoming a gigantic evil in our country. It is a drug that possesses remarkable powers, and is in numerous cases used with benefit, but it is doing a thousand times more harm than good. Many hundreds of tons of this pernicious drug are said to be annually brought into this port alone, and by far the greater portion of it is used, not as a medicine to remove disease and suffering, but as a narcotic to exhilarate the animal feelings to produce its peculiar excitement and dreamy intoxication. It is a seductive, dangerous foe to the human race, and its victims may be numbered by hundreds of thousands, and they are often found among the best portions of the community.

In its crude state, or in the form of laudanum and morphine, opium is daily and hourly used by great numbers of the best men and women. Unlike alcoholic drinks, its use is not confined to the lower strata of society, but the most intelligent and cultivated have become its slaves. Physicians, clergymen, lawyers, orators, actors, literary men, mothers of fami-

lies and females in all walks of life are numbered among its victims.

Its effects are not so immediately apparent as those of alcoholic drinks. Its use is begun in secret, and may be continued a considerable time without the suspicion of near friends being excited. But ere long it tells upon the strongest constitution. The nerves are shattered, the tone of the stomach is destroyed, the countenance becomes sallow, melancholy, and forebodings torture the mind, and constantly impel the unfortunate victim to a continued use of the soothing, luring, and most pernicious poison, the use of which he constantly increases until he becomes a mere wreck, to whom death and oblivion is more desirable than life, and who goes down to his grave a blighted, shattered, ruined man. The picture is a fearful one, but is not overdrawn. This vile drug is to-day ruining thousands of individuals among us, and thousands of families are suffering from its dire effects.

All bad habits are hard to break; when formed, they become cruel masters; but among all the bad habits to which poor humanity are enslaved, none, probably, are so hard to break off as the use of opium. Begun as a remedy, perhaps, for some pain or a headache, a taste is soon formed and a desire soon established for the peculiar stimulation and intoxication it produces, and as the use has constantly to be increased to produce the same results, the inevitable wretchedness hinted at is ere long reached. A few persons of strong will and self-control, when they perceive the direful effects of the poison are able to abstain from its use and to cast it aside, but by far the greater number are impelled on by the unnat-

ural appetite to destruction and death. If some embargo can be placed upon this article, so as to prevent its importation, production and use, it will be a great benefit indeed. The subject should command the attention of our national Legislators and law-makers. Every person should be made familiar with the great danger which attends the use of this drug, and avoid it as they would escape the most deadly foe.

There are numerous other ills existing among us; but having already transcended our prescribed bounds, we will be compelled to defer a further consideration of the subject for the present. It is to be hoped, uowever, that in the advances made in intelligence and education, men and women may learn to follow in virtuous paths which lead to health and happiness, and shun those which through passion, perverted taste, pernicious habits and crime, lead to wretchedness and misery. We must all learn to depend upon our own efforts for the amount of virtue and happiness we secure and are able to impart to others, and not look to an imaginary being somewhere in the sky, or to the merits of the blood of an individual who died near two thousand years ago. Each person must be responsible for the good or ill he does, and each man is, to a great extent, the creator and arbiter of his own happiness, or his own misery. We, of course, greatly influence and affect each other. We can largely increase or lessen the happiness of those around us. Here is our duty, here is our allegiance, and not in the sky above us. We must make our heaven on the earth, and not in the air.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

For hundreds of years there have been two classes of men who have given their time and attention to fire and to fire-works. One class are styled pyrotechnists, and it is their business to get up all varieties of fire-works, embracing rockets, fire-wheels, Roman candles etc., in which colored lights, stars and fiery sprays are artistically blended, sometimes attended with loud detonations, in which chlorate of potash, nitrate of potash, phosphorus, fulminating mercury, per-oxide of manganese, sulphur, carbon and various other chemicals are used. The skill employed in this branch of business is very considerable, and most brilliant and showy effects are produced. The avocation, unfortunately, however, is a very hazardous one, and many a man employed in the business, has been killed outright or shockingly mutilated; and many a building, in which this kind of work has been prosecuted, has been destroyed or greatly damaged by explosions and ignitions connected with this dangerous

manufacture. Insurance companies are extremely disinclined to take risks on property of this extra hazardous character.

The other class have been called "fire kings," and they are those who, by the application of alum and other substances which are non-conductors to the surfaces of the body, are enabled to endure an incredible amount of heat—to step on red hot bars of iron, to handle heated metals, apply them to the tongue, and take fire in various ways into the mouth etc., etc.

It is astonishing how great a degree of heat the living organization is capable of enduring. Men have gone into ovens hot enough to roast beef, and have remained there while the meat roasted. We do not, at this moment, remember the highest degree of heat the human system has been submitted to without apparent injury; but it is over two hundred and twelve degrees, Fahrenheit, at which point water boils. The resisting power of living organizations is so great, that a man will emerge in a sound condition from a heated oven, as we observed, where flesh, deprived of life, would soon be cooked through and through.

India and Europe have boasted in times past of several of these fire-kings, whose astonishing powers of endurance have excited the wonder of large assemblages. Some thirty years ago, or more, this city had one of these celebrities—a Frenchman by the name of Chaubert—who, on many occasions, exhibited his powers in this direction before considerable numbers. Despite his charlatanry, he really was able to endure a high degree of heat with but slight injury, and gave a fair representation of the extremely high

temperature a human being is capable of enduring for a short period.

There is, however, a limit to the possibility of human endurance in heated air or in close proximity to fire. There is a point which cannot be transcended with any degree of safety. The unnumbered thousands of human beings who have been burned at the stake, and others who have been accidentally caught in burning buildings, ships and steamboats, most conclusively prove that human flesh *will burn* if submitted to a hot fire; and there is no help for it.

The most remarkable "fire kings" that have been heard of—those who were able to "stand fire" vastly better than Chaubert or any other fire expert, living or dead, or in any age of the world, were the three Hebrew children, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, whom the prince of Nebuchadnezzar's eunuchs, renamed, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. The story of their being thrown into a fiery furnace is so well known, we hardly need to repeat it.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans, notwithstanding Daniel had told him his dream and the interpretation thereof, after which he seemed to acknowledge Daniel's God, did not seem to give his full adhesion to the same, but desired to have a god of his own and one he could compel the people to bow down to. So he created a god of gold, sixty cubits high. If a cubit is eighteen inches, the golden god was ninety feet in height, and fourteen feet across; and if a cubit is twenty-two inches, as some Bible scholars claim, the god was one hundred and ten feet high and sixteen and a half feet across—a most respectable god indeed, so far as size and material both were concerned. The account does not say whether

the god was hollow or solid; but if it was solid, it assuredly contained wealth enough in itself to pay off the national debts of both England and the United States. He was a God that most any worshiper might bow down to. We think we know many Christians who would bow very low before such an amount of gold. In fact, they seem to be as susceptible to the magic influence of this aureate deity as any class of people in the world. There have, probably, been no races of men since this earth has been inhabited, who have been more devoted, persistent and servile worshipers of the golden god, than Jews and Christians. If a Nebuchadnezzar could now set up such a god in our Central Park, or at the Capitol at Washington, Christians and Jews from all parts of the land would flock to its shrine and bow in profound and subservient adoration to this god of Gold, especially if they could be allowed to saw off or detach certain parts of the image and carry the same away with them.

Not so with the three Hebrew young men. They were made of stern stuff and would not bow, even to gold. At this, the King with the long name, became very angry and proceeded to carry out the threat he had made. He caused the three boys to be bound, and had strong men of his army to throw them into a fiery furnace, made seven times hotter than usual. The heat of the furnace can be imagined, when it is remembered it was so great, that the mighty men who were compelled to throw the three boys in, though they approached only the mouth of the furnace, were utterly destroyed. But the young men who went to the very heart of the furnace, were not burned nor scorched in the slightest degree. Not even a hair of

their heads, nor a thread of their garments was singed at all. It seems their flesh was not only invulnerable to the fire, but the fabrics of which their apparel was composed, were equally secure from its effects. They were the most complete fire-proof mortals that were ever heard of, and could "stand fire" far better than any of their competitors in any age of the world. Salamanders—fabulous animals said to live in the fire—could not have stood that extreme heat—seven times greater than the furnace had ever been made before. Thermometers were not invented at that time, so the precise heat which that furnace reached was never known. but as it was seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, and as six hundred degrees, Fahrenheit, is not an unusual degree for a furnace to reach, some four thousand degrees may be supposed to have been reached—a higher altitude on the scale, than is often attained. It must have started the perspiration freely.

It may be supposed that the furnace was not a good place to receive company, but, unseemly as it was, they had a visitor, and the King, looking in and seeing not only the three safe and sound, but a fourth there also, was justly surprised. He said "the form of the fourth was like the Son of God." What he, a heathen king, who had been only in the metal-god business, could know about the form of a son of God, is a little mysterious. It may well be supposed, of all men in the world, Nebudchadnezzar would be about the last that could have any true conception of what the "Son of God" would be like. But it is Daniel who tells the story, and if he is great at all, it is in mysteries and large stories. How the King could see into the fiery furnace and perceive who were there, is more than

we can explain. Furnaces are not so constructed that people standing away from the effects of the heat can look into them so as to see if men were there walking about. But we know not in what form the Chaldeans made their furnaces; they may have constructed them upon the plan that the Christians in Spain arranged their *au-tos da-fe* or human burning on a large scale, so that the kings, nobles and the numerous spectators who attended the exhibition, could easily witness the writhings and contortions of the unhappy wretches consigned to the relentless flames. As in this case, the committing of human beings to a fiery furnace, may have been one species of public amusement for gala-day purposes. It is hard to believe, however, that they were people of such cruelty, or that their taste could have been so abhorrent. That kind of amusement was principally reserved for Christians of a later time.

It may be asked, then, do we believe the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego withstanding the effects of that intensly heated furnace? Yes, we believe it to be an untruth; untrue because it is opposed to all our experience and utterly at variance with nature's laws. We know that fire is the greatest disorganizer in the known world, and that no organized substance can withstand its potent effects, In all cases where human beings have been submitted to flames of fire or to a degree of heat more intense than the living organization is able to withstand, they have invariably been overcome with the heat, and their lives destroyed. As in the thousands upon thousands of cases of burning doomed heretics at the hands of *merciful* Christians one thousand years ago, five hundred years ago, or

three hundred years ago, God never in one case interfered with the laws or forces of nature to prevent fire from causing death, we do not believe he did three thousand years ago. It is the nature of fire to destroy organized life, and we cannot think that God has ever interfered to prevent it. It is not his province to set his own laws aside for Jew, Chaldean, Christian or Turk.

We much more readily believe the whole thing to be "one of our Dan's big stories," or the story of some unknown person, who drew entirely upon his imagination, and whose vagaries were attributed to Daniel, and by some means became incorporated into the Jewish sacred writings. We feel under no more obligation to believe an impossible story in one book than in another. Had the Jews been scarce of material of which to compose their sacred writings, and had adopted the Arabian Nights, or any portion of them, we should have been compelled to reject them, and to disbelieve their exaggerated and impossible recitals, and conclude that the laws of God, or the laws of Nature are never set aside by any power in existence.

Possibly we are a little like the negro blacksmith who had recently gotten religion at a revival, and needs must be inducted into the "true faith," and into the "mysteries of godliness." He listened with rapt attention to the accounts of the creation of the world in six days from nothing; of the great calamity our first parents brought upon themselves and their numerous posterity in eating an apple by the persuasions of a snake; that God repented of the job he had performed, and decided to destroy the entire human and animal races, except two of a kind, saved in an ark, and that the waters descended all over the earth

and covered it to the tops of the highest mountain; how Moses and Aaron produced the plagues of Egypt, pertaining to the frogs, the lice, the locusts and the turning of all the water of the land into blood; how to let the Israelites escape from the country, the Red Sea opened, the waters standing up on either side like a wall, so that near a million of people could walk through on dry land; how for forty years this vast number of people were fed in the wilderness upon manna daily sent from heaven; about Joshua's stopping the sun and moon in their courses, that he might have a few more hours of daylight to destroy his enemies; about Samson tearing open the jaws of a lion with his own hands, and finally pulling down a large temple by removing two pillars at once, and with his own strength; how Elijah caused no rain to fall upon the earth for three years and a half, and was afterwards taken up bodily in a fiery chariot into heaven; about Elisha causing the destruction of forty-two children by two she-bears, and his afterwards bringing a dead man to life, and causing iron to swim. He was told also about Jonah being swallowed by a whale and remaining in the stomach of the fish for three days, when he was vomited up on dry land.

All these narrations he listened to with close attention, as they were explained to him, and he frequently asked questions about the wonderful occurences when he failed to get a correct understanding, and he thought that, as all these things were written in the word of God, he could believe them to be true. When the story was told of the three Hebrew children being thrown into a burning hot furnace where they received not the slightest harm, he hesitated somewhat. He had had some experience with fire,

and had found out its merciless character—that it would burn whatever was thrown in it that was susceptible of being burned, and he was disposed to enquire into the facts of this particular case.

"Does yer mean to tell me," said he, "dat dem tree men was trown in dat red hot funace, an' didn't burn up?"

"That is true; not a hair of their heads was scorched."

"What's dat you'se a telling me! not a ha'r o' dere head, nor tread o' dere clo'es burnt?"

"Just so."

"An' dey was trown rite in dat bilin' hot, roarin' funace, an' 't never burnt 'em 't all?"

"Precisely so. The fire never harmed them in the least."

"Now look ahere," said the negro, "I can't bleve dat. It can't be true. Fire'll burn, for I'se tried it; I don't bleve dis yere ole fire story, no how; an' now, since I tink more 'bout it, I don't bleve none o' dem oder big stories you'se been tellin' me, noder!"

TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS,

Containing two pages each of terse, trenchant reading matter, without redundancy.

Price by mail, 4 cts. per doz.; 25 cts. per hundred; $2.00 per thousand.

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

Daniel in the Lions' Den.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the many extravagant and improbable stories with which the Bible abounds, few are more extraordinary and incredible than those related in the book of Daniel. Who the author of the book was, cannot be known. It purports to have been written by Daniel, who lived over six hundred years before Christ; but it is thought by Bible critics that portions of the book were written in the time of the Maccabees, less than two hundred years before Christ; but it is not very material how this was. It is a book of wonderful stories and remarkable dreams—which entitles it to rank with the last book in the Bible, called "Revelations"—which reads like the ravings of a mad man, and which none but an insane person can understand.

The dreams of Daniel about the beasts that rose up out of the water, the horns that grew and extended to the host of heaven and pulling down some of the host thereof, (probably meaning the stars, and it must have been a long horn, and a strong one, to reach so

far and do such execution), his dreams of images, etc., etc., have been a great puzzle to divines for centuries. Scores of times have these sage divines, by counting the "horns," the "images," the "times," and the "weeks," mentioned in Daniel, been able to predict to a day and an hour, when the day of "eternal smash" was to come, and the end of all sublunary things take place. Oft and oft again, within the last forty years, have the saints had their ascension robes made, and held themselves in readiness to "go up" at the sound of the trump, to meet their Savior in the air; but as often have they been disappointed; for in every case has the final day of all things been postponed, and the wise heads have returned to the book of Daniel to more carefully count the weeks, the times, and the horns, to fix another date in the near future, when the awful day should *surely* come—when the end of time would certainly arrive.

Within a few months, even, the last great disappointment in this line occurred; the Lord failed to put in an appearance, and the saints were under the painful necessity of again laying away their ascension robes, while the knowing ones and the interpreters of dreams and visions had again to overhaul their spiritual arithmetic and make a new calculation as to just when the dread day shall surely come. Whether another day is positively set for the "Son of Man" to appear in the clouds, when all the faithful will ascend to meet him, is more than we can say. If it has not been, it doubtless will be, again to disappoint the ardent expectations of credulous dupes. Although many have said in years past that if the final day did not come at a certain date in the near future, that they would no longer have faith or confidence in the word

of God, yet, when the day passed, and nothing unusual happened, they again turned to their Bibles as fondly as ever, to count the horns of the beasts, to estimate the weeks, and times, and half-times, to solve this time with unerring certainity the great mysteries of God. It is one of the curiosities of poor human nature to observe what simpletons and fools men and women can make of themselves in matters of religion and faith in that old book, and what importance they attach to dreams and meaningless visions

Daniel seems to have left Judea in the reign of King Jehoiakim, when he was quite a youth, at the time his nation was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and carried to Babylon, and with three other Hebrew children seemed to be taken into special favor by the king in their new home. His name was changed from Daniel to Belteshazzar at the time the names of his companions were also changed; it was decided they should be taught the literature of the Chaldeans and to be fed three years upon the same quality of meat and wine of which the king partook, doubtless, upon the supposition that this kind of diet would contribute to their physical and mental growth. The four young men, however, it seems decided not to eat the meat and drink the wine of the king but to use a diet of pulse and water, which probably was much like our bean-porridge—a good enough dish, now and then, but perhaps hardly the thing for a steady diet. They, however, seemed to flourish finely upon it, for at the end of ten days they were looking more plump and healthy than any of the other children who lived upon the king's prescribed diet, and they were allowed to have their own way in the matter of food.

It seems by the narrative that Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream, so remarkable, in fact, that he could not remember a word of it. He, however, called all his magicians and wise men together to tell him what his dream was which he had forgotten. The king was so unreasonable as to threaten them all with death if they did not tell him what he had dreamed. It was in vain that they remonstrated with him, and told him it was an unreasonable demand which no living person could comply with, for he still insisted upon the terms being carried out which he had laid down. Had not Daniel come forward and announced to the king that he could declare unto him, not only his dream, but the interpretation also, there is no telling how many of these poor magicians would have been executed. After four days of thought and labor, upon the strength of the bean-porridge diet, Daniel—if we are to believe the story—told the king what he had dreamed, which was about a great image, with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs and feet of iron and clay. Whether this was precisely the dream which "old Neb" had dreamed, nobody knows, and perhaps he did not know himself, but inasmuch as the young man boldly declared it to him and said with confidence, it was *the* dream, the old king seemed to be satisfied, and after hearing the interpretation, he conferred great honors upon Daniel, giving him fine presents and making a great man of him.

It might be supposed such a mark of divine power as Nebuchadnezzar had received, would have converted him to the true faith, and made him a worshiper of the God of the Jews, but not so, for in the

very next chapter we are told about his erecting an image of gold, sixty cubits, or one hundred and ten feet high—the most valuable god of which any mention is made in sacred or profane history, and one which, must be supposed, would seriously tax all the gold mines in the world. At this time, when we have the gold mines of California, Nevada, Australia and South America, which at that time were unknown, would, combined, find it to be no easy matter to turn out gold enough in a year to make a god over one hundred feet in height and eleven feet across.

Nebuchadnezzar commanded that every person in his kingdom should bow down to this golden god, which all seemed to do readily enough, save Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; and for refusing to do so, they were thrown into a fiery furnace heated expressly for the occasion and made seven times hotter than usual, with not the slightest harm, however, to the three young men, thrown bound into the seething fire, but sudden death to the strong man who threw them in. As all who did not bow down to the image were thrown into the furnace, and as Daniel was not thrown in, we are to infer that he bowed down to the image. If he did not, he surely was unlike the great bulk of his race, who have ever proved themselves to cherish a warm and devoted admiration for gold.

Ten years after this, and thirty-three years from the date of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream, behold, he had another dream which troubled him greatly. This time his dream was about a tall tree which reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the ends of the earth. (Where the *ends* of the earth are located, is not told us). Daniel was again called upon to interpret this dream, which he easily did, and it was, that

Nebuchadnezzar should be driven from the habitation of men, to dwell with the beasts of the field and to eat grass like an ox; and "seven times" were to pass over, before he should return, when he should become aware that the Most High ruled in heaven.

The king murmured at this remarkable prophecy or decree, as well he might, but there was no mercy nor pity for him. That self-same hour he was driven forth from the sons of men, and he abode in the fields; he was wet with the dews of heaven, and he ate grass, sure enough, like an ox. It is not known to this day how long "seven times" was, that the old king was thus debarred from the society of men; but at all events it was long enough for his hair to grow out like eagles' feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. When, it is intimated, he was restored to his throne and his kingdom, though but little is afterwards said about him.

The story is a very extraordinary one, to say the least. The stomach and digestive apparatus of the human race is differently constituted from the bovine class of animals, and is very illy calculated for subsisting upon grass, and it is very difficult to understand how a man could live upon grass, and how his hair could become like eagles' feathers.

It is singular, also, that the Chaldeans, who were among the most enlightened nations of that age of the world, should allow their king to stray into the fields and live there like an ox. If he became demented or insane, they doubtless would have taken better care of him than that. It is very remarkable, too, if such an occurrence ever did take place with one of their great kings, that their histories should contain no mention of it, and that no body in the

world should ever have mentioned it, save the author of the book of Daniel. It should be taken as truth, with very many grains of allowance.

When Belshazzer succeeded to the throne of Babylon, after his father had "gone to grass," he seemed to go in for having a good time, and got up a great feast, at which a thousand guests attended. In the midst of the hilarity, however, an event took place which produced a sudden damper upon the king's rejoicing. A hand became visible, and wrote four words—"*Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*"—upon the wall of the festival room, and none of the astrologists and sooth-sayers could interpret the meaning of the ominous words; but when, at the suggestion of the queen, Daniel was called for, he soon unraveled the mystery, and read it off forthwith. It meant that the days of the kingdom were numbered; that the king was weighed in the balance and found wanting; and that the kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians. It was like a "word and blow," for "in that night was Belshazzer slain."

Darius was the next ruler in the country and Daniel succeeded in securing his good will and in obtaining office under him, as he had with his predecessors. Daniel was a very prayerful individual and he prayed regularly at stated times; but his enemies induced Darius to sign a royal decree that whoever should ask any petition of God or man for thirty days, save of the king, he should be cast into the den of lions. This made no difference with our good Daniel, and he kept on praying every day as was his wont. When this intelligence was brought to the ears of the king he was very sorrowful, for Daniel was a favorite of his, but as the laws of the Medes and Persians could

not be changed he caused Daniel to be thrown into the den of lions. It is probable these were not wild lions, roaming the forests, for they do not, in a state of nature, congregate in "dens." The "den" was probably a cage where lions, more or less tamed, were kept, either for exhibition or other purposes, something as Van Amburgh, Barnum and other men have done in our time.

Within the last thirty years it has been a very common thing for some one connected with a menagerie to enter the lions' cage in course of the performance, and go through various exercises. If the lions are well fed and under a good degree of training, they seldom have offered to do any injury to those who have thus entered their cages. Some persons, doubtless by their superior magnetic powers, are able to control, to a great extent, animals, as well as men. Van Amburgh, doubtless, possessed this peculiarity in his intercourse with lions, as Rarey did with the horse. Is it not improbable that Daniel also possessed similar characteristics? If, however, the lions had just been fed and their bellies were full, and an old man like Daniel—for he then had got to be about eighty years of age, and probably somewhat shrivelled and dried up, it is quite possible the beasts would voluntarily let him alone, and this without the interference of God or any of his angels.

Those, however, who choose to think that a miracle was performed in this case, and are of the opinion that God caused the mouths of the beasts to be closed, so they could not bite his servant Daniel, certainly have the right to entertain such belief. How would such persons like to make the test, by having a dozen priests make long prayers over them, imploring the

protection of heaven, and then be thrown into a cage with a lot of hungry lions? Would they be willing to trust themselves to the safe keeping of their God under such circumstances? Is God less able, or less disposed to stop lions' mouths now, than twenty-five hundred years ago? If he did it then, why not now? It is our opinion God and augels interfered very little with the mouths of lions; they are, doubtless, left to be governed by the natures they are endowed with; and this was the case in Daniel's time as much as now; but it being a free country, any one can believe the affair took place as narrated; and can also believe it was a striking miracle if they can persuade themselves to do so.

After this Daniel went into the dreaming business, and some of his dreams portended great events. One of his dreams was in reference to four beasts rising from the sea, one of which was like unto a bear with three ribs in his mouth and the ribs spoke and uttered words. That certainly sounds like a dream and a crazy one at that. His second dream was about a big ram with long horns which bore down everything before it, till he met a goat, also with a long horn, and more powerful than he, which proved too much for him.

Daniel's dreams may be of vast importance to the human race, and it may be that God busied himself in writing them down for after generations, but if so, the world has hardly realized any benefit from it, except to have something to quarrel over and puzzle their simple minds about. It would seem, God could be able to find more important employment.

Besides dreams, Daniel alsc had visions while asleep with his face to the ground, and wherein they

differed from dreams, is not very clear. One was about Michael, the great prince, when he shall stand up, and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and others to everlasting contempt. Daniel enquired of a man dressed in linen, and who stood upon the water, how it was, and the man told him there would be one thousand, two hundred and ninety days before it should take place; but that number of days, and that number of years passed, without the vision being fulfilled. Thousands are still enquiring, "when shall it be?" But old Daniel himself passed off the stage without knowing what his vision meant, and we will all do the same; we shall never know what the meaning of these vision was, for the simple reason that there was no meaning in it. Of such dreams and chimeras is the Christian creed composed.

Read THE TRUTH SEEKER; a live Journal devoted to Science, Morals, and Freethought. Price per year $2.00, for six months $1.00, for three months 50 cts.

Circulate the TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS containing from four to seventy-five pages each. Price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount in quantity.

Sow broadcast the TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS, four cents per dozen, 25cts, per 100, $2.00 per 1,000, all sent postpaid. Address

D. M. BENNETT, 335 Broadway, N. Y.

AN HOUR WITH THE DEVIL.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[Delivered before the New York Liberal Association, at Trenor's New Hall, 1266 Broadway, Sunday, Dec. 5th, 1875.]

As far back in the twilight of human existence as we are able to penetrate, we find our race has believed in evil spirits, demons, fiends and devils. In the night and gloom of man's primitive condition, before the light of intelligence and reason illumined his dark, uncultured mind, when he was an utter savage and lived in caves and fed upon the wild fruits of the earth and the carcasses of such animals as in unequal conflict he was able to subdue and slay, he first became aware of the forces and powers of nature, and that they often caused him pain and discomfort. He felt the burning rays of the sun, the storms and tempests, and the cold winds and biting frosts of winter. These annoyed him and deprived him of enjoyment, and he soon regarded them as enemies. That which contributed to his pleasure or comfort was good; that

which prevented his happiness and enjoyment was evil.

Thus, in the childhood stage of his existence, and while he was unable to comprehend the true nature of these forces he soon learned to regard them as good or bad beings, which alternately pleased or displeased him. Being unable to realize the possibility of a force or result similar to himself, acting without extraneous aid, he naturally decided that the various forces of nature were the movements of invisible beings, some good and others bad.

As his observation and knowledge slowly enlarged, he perceived an increasing number of agencies and forces that affected him for good or ill, and, consequently, the numbers of these invisible beings greatly multiplied; so much so, that a god or a demon was stationed by him at every waterfall, every river, every lake; in the woods, in the groves, in the shady dells, in the zephyrs, in the breezes, in the gales, in the hurricanes; in the north wind, the south wind, the east wind and the west wind; in day and night, in morning, noonday, and evening; in spring, summer, autumn, and winter; in fact he imagined and assigned a god, a demon, a sprite, a fairy, a gnome, to every form of matter and motion, and every place and condition of which he was able to take cognizance; and as to him there seemed to be more bad than good, it is not strange that his demons or devils greatly outnumbered his deities. As these imaginary spirits caused him disquietude, and interfered more directly with his happiness, his attention was more called to them and his ingenuity was taxed to please and placate them. To these he addressed his prayers and sup-

plications, as upon them he wished to make the most favorable impression.

Crude and ignorant as primitive man was in this state of animism, he wished a representative for the sub-deities, sprites and devils alluded to, and he endowed numerous objects in nature with these invisible existences, and among such objects were cats, dogs, sheep, cattle, horses, birds, reptiles, fishes and numerous inanimate substances, as plants of numerous kinds, blocks of wood, stones, crude images of clay, etc., etc. This was the condition of feticism which all primitive nations had to pass through, and which led to more advanced ideas.

As man's intellectual powers enlarged, as he became able to imperfectly reason from cause to effect; as he learned to develop a crude language by which he could converse with his fellows, he was enabled to take higher views of the forces of nature which he came in contact with, and he began to have more comprehensive views of the nature of good and evil, and to assign them antagonistic positions in the world around him. It did not require long for him to perceive that the sun was the source of light and heat, and all vegetable and animal life. He regarded this orb as the great deity that caused all good results, and that its absence was the source of evil. Thus light and heat became to him great *goods*, and darkness and cold, great *evils*—the one a god, the other a devil, in perpetual warfare with each other, and in turn blessing and cursing the human race and all that has life. These opposite principles became fully personified as God and Devil, in the wake of each of which were numerous subordinates, as we have seen.

That the original condition of man was on the low

animal, savage plane alluded to, has, by the developments and acquisitions of science become so well established in the minds of the better informed portions of our race, that the fact is hardly longer questioned except by theologians and their supporters who have an interest in perpetuating the ancient superstitions handed down from former ages, and a system of faith which they learned in their childhood to regard as divine revelation. "Pre-historic archæology shows that man, as first presented to our view, was a low, ignorant, brutal savage." Lenormant, in his Ancient History," (Vol. I. p. 25,) says: "To find the most ancient vestige of the existence and the industry of man, we must go back to that period which geologists call quarternary—the period immediately preceding the commencement of the present geological epoch. The arms and utensils of this premature age are, for the most part, pointed axes of flint, formed by breaking off large splinters. We can easily see that these flints, whose white coating proves their great antiquity, were intended to cut, to cleave, and to pierce. Some of these stones are scrapers, which were used, no doubt, to clean the inside of skins which the savages of the Stone Age used as a defense against the cold. We may even form a pretty correct idea of their mode of life. The cultivation of the soil and the domestication of animals were unknown. They wandered in the forest and inhabited natural caverns in the mountains. Every branch of the human race, without exception, has passed through the three stages of the "age of stone," and its traces have everywhere been proven. . . . There is no necessary sychronism between these three stages in different parts of the world. The Stone Age is a

period that cannot be chronologically determined, but a state of human progress which, in different countries, varied enormously in date. Entire populations have been discovered, who, at the close of the last century, and even in our own day, have not passed out of the Stone Age."

Learned geologists differ as to the number of thousand years that have passed since man's era on the earth; some have estimated the time at one hundred and fifty thousand years, while others place the time at a lower figure. There are few, who, judging from the fossilized human remains found in ancient caves and under deposits in the early formations, and from the wearing and changing in the beds of rivers since such deposits have taken place, that not less than forty thousand years have rolled away since man has inhabited the earth. Lyell, Hitchcock, Dana, Denton and other distinguished geologists concur in this opinion.

Prof. Whitney, our American philologist, says: "Modern science is proving, by the most careful and exhaustive study of man and his works, that our race began its existence on earth at the bottom of the scale, instead of at the top, and has gradually been working upward; that human powers have had a history of development; that all the elements of culture —as the arts of life, art, science, language, religion, philosophy—have been wrought out by slow and painful efforts, in the conflict between the soul and mind of man on the one hand, and external motion on the other, a conflict in which man has, in favored races and under exceptional conditions of endowment and circumstance, been triumphantly the victor, and is still going on to new conquests. For ourselves, we

heartily hold this latter view, deeming it to be established already on a firm basis, soon to be made impregnable."

Edward Clodd, an eminent English writer, in his "Childhood of the World," says: "Man was once wild, rough and savage, frightened at his own shadow, and still more at the roar of the thunder and the quiver of lightning, which he thought were the clapping of the wings and the flashing of the eyes of the angry spirit as he came flying from the sun. . . . There are several reasons for believing that man was once wild and naked, and that only by slow degrees did he become clothed and civilized. There have been found in Europe, Asia, Africa and America; but especially in Europe, thousands of tools and weapons used by savages now living in various parts of the earth, and among whom no traces of a past civilization can be found. One of the first things which man needed was some sharp-edged tool, harder than the thing he wished to cut. He knew nothing of the metals, and he therefore made use of the stones laying about. Men of science have given the name "Age of Stone," to that far off time when stone was used for weapons and implements. These oldest stone weapons have been chiefly found in places known as the "drift," and buried under ground and clay and stones, which have been *drifted* or carried down by rivers in their ceaseless flow. In those early days of man's history have wild animals shared Europe with him. There were mammoths, or wooly haired elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses; there were cave-lions, cave-bears, cave-hyenas, and other beasts of a much larger size than any found in the world at this day. That they lived at the

same time man did, is certain; because under layers of earth their bones have been found side by side with his and with the weapons which he made. Year after year man learnt to shape his tools and weapons better, until really well-formed spear-heads, daggers, hatchets, hammers, and other implements were made, and at a far later date he had learnt the art of polishing them. The older age is called the "Old Stone Age," and the latter the "Newer Stone Age." The better shaped tools and weapons have been chiefly found in caves which were hollowed by water, ages before any living thing dwelt there. These caves were used by man, not only to live in, but also to bury their dead in; and from the different remains found in and near them, it is thought that feasts were held when the burials took place, and food and weapons were placed with the dead because their friends thought such things were needed by them as they traveled on their journey to the other world. , . .

There is a large cavern in Brixham, on the south coast of Devonshire, which was discovered fourteen years ago through the falling in of a part of the roof. The floor is of stalagmite, or particles of lime, which have been brought down from the roof by the dropping of water, and became hardened into stone again. In this floor, which is about a foot in thickness, were found bones of the reindeer and cave-bear, while below it was a red loamy mass, fifteen feet thick in some parts, in which were buried flint flakes, or knives. and bones of the mammoth. Beneath this was a bed of gravel, more than twenty feet thick, in which flint flakes and small bones were found, including the bones of bears and wooly elephants. As it is known these flakes of flint were chipped by the hands

of man, it is not hard to prove he lived in this country when those animals roamed over it.

You may ask, what proof have we that the bones of these creatures are so old? Apart from the fact that, for many centuries, no living mammoth has been seen, we have the finding of its bones buried at a goodly depth; and as it is certain no one would take the trouble to dig a grave to put them in, there must be some other cause for the mass of loam under which they are found. There are several ways by which the various bones may have got into the cave. The creatures to which they belonged may have died upon the hillside, and their bones may have washed into the cave; or they may have sought refuge, or what in the case I am now describing, seems most likely, lived therein; but, be this as it may, we have to account for the thirty-five feet of loam and gravel in which their remains are buried. The agent that thus covered them from view for long, long years, is that active tool of nature, which, before the day when no living thing was upon the earth, and ever since, has been cutting through rocks, opening the deep valleys, shaping the highest mountains, hollowing out the lowest caverns, and which is carrying the soil from one place to another to form new lands where now the deep sea rolls. It is *water* which carried that deposit into Brixham cavern and covered the bones, and which, since the days that mammoth, and bear, and reindeer lived in Devonshire, has scooped out the surrounding valleys one hundred feet deeper. And although the time which water takes to deepen a channel, or eat out a cavern, depends upon the speed with which it flows, you may judge that the quickest stream works slowly to those who watch it, when I

tell you that the river Thames, flowing at its present rate, takes 11,470 years to scoop out *its* valley *one foot* in depth lower. Men of science have, therefore, some reason for believing that the flint weapons were made by men who lived many thousands of years ago." Science is thus teaching us the great age of the earth, and the great antiquity of the human race upon it.

These great facts are very damaging to current theological dogmas, and pointedly disagree with the teachings of a pseudo revelation. In matters of this kind, however, science is the arbiter which the world will accept, and it is in vain for the adherents of obsolete theories to attempt to push her aside. It being, however, our present purpose to look a little after the Devil, we will waive a further consideration of the subject at present.

As mankind made further advances in the domain of intelligence and reason, he also accepted wider views of the good and bad principles in nature; and different nations elaborated settled opinions as to the nature of evil. Thus the theologies and the mythologies of the olden times gradually emerged from the primitive, crude mental condition of the race. We will briefly glance at some of the more prominent nationalities and their evil deities and devils.

In India, that cradle-land of theology and religious superstition, was gotten up thousands of years ago, a trinity, consisting of Brahma, Vishnou and Siva—the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. The third personage in this trinity, if not really a devil, was the destructive element and the cause of death and disorganization. It is needless to say here, that this trinity was believed in long anterior to the one adopt-

ed in connection with the Jewish God, known as the Christian trinity, but such is the fact.

The Hindoos also believed in a "legion of Evil Spirits, called Rakshasas, who had a prince named Ravana; also in numerous classes of good and evil spirits, called Sooras and Assooras, which they believed to be step-brothers in perpetual hostility, to illustrate the supposed antagonism between spirit and matter. Wicked spirits were generally described as giants, and were often said to have a great serpent for their leader. They were continually aiming to do injury to mankind, and fought desperate battles with Indra and his Spirits of Light. They would have taken his Paradise by storm, and subverted the whole order of the Universe, if Brahma had not sent Vishnou to circumvent their plans. To perform this mission successfully, he assumed various forms at different times, and was twice incarnated in a human body and dwelt among mortals"—another instance, showing that a later mythology was able to appropriate an idea, however fallacious its origin.

The worshipers of Siva believed he had numerous wives according to his various titles in the multifarious departments of distinction or change. Under the name of Iswaras he was wedded to Isa, supposed to represent Nature, which, in all languages, is metaphorically called *she*. As changer of the seasons and promoter of germination, he was united to Parvati, Goddess of Illusions and Enchantments. As Time, the Destroyer, his mate was the dark goddess, Cali, with four hands full of deadly weapons, a necklace of human skulls, and a girdle of slaughtered giant's hands. Thus, like the numerous gods and devils who

have succeeded him, we see he had a special fondness for females.

There was early in India a universal belief in evil spirits of various ranks and degrees of power, from gigantic demons, who attack the orbs of light, down to the malicious little Pucks who delight in small mischief. These were supposed to enter the minds of men, producing bad thoughts and criminal actions, and also to take possession of the body, producing insanity, fits and all manner of diseases. It was supposed they could be cast out only by some form of holy words, pronounced by a priest, with duly prescribed ceremonies.

The Egyptians, vieing in antiquity with the Hindoos, had also their evil spirit or devil. His name was Typho, and he was the brother of the god Osiris, who was for a long time the principal deity of that ancient nation of literature, theology and art.

It is not a little curious that, in all the mythologies of the world, the god and the devil have been closely connected by the ties of consanguinity. In India the creating and destroying principles were united in the same personage. In Egypt the beneficent and destructive gods were twin-brothers. In Persia, Ormuzd, the King of Light, and Ahriman or Ahrimanes, the Prince of Darkness, both emanated from the Eternal One. In the Grecian and Roman mythologies, Pluto was the son of a god, as were also Vulcan and Pan. In the Christian mythology, the Devil, if not the offspring of God, was of his direct creation, an honorable member of his household, and was for a long time on the most intimate terms with him.

In the ancient Persian mythology, the evil spirit, Ahriman, became jealous of the first-born. In con-

sequence of his pride and envy, the Eternal One condemned him to remain three thousand years in the dark realm of shadows, where no ray of light could penetrate. During this time Ormuzd created the firmament, the heavenly orbs and the celestial spirits without the knowledge of his unfortunate brother Ahriman. When the latter had served out his time in darkness and returned, the dazzling beauty revived his old feeling of envy, and he resolved to compete with Ormuzd in everything. He created seven spirits, called arch-devs, in opposition to an equal number of good spirits in the service of Ormuzd, and placed them on the seven planets to substitute evil in place of good. He also created twenty-eight spirits, called Devs, to counteract the good Izeds, by spreading all manner of disorder and distress. The most powerful and pernicious of these was an impure serpent, with two feet, named Ashmogh. He subsequently produced a crowd of genii to oppose the beneficent work of the Fervers, the good angels in the employ of Ormuzd. Thus the contest became violent and continued.

Ormuzd, to arrest the increase of evil, made an egg containing kindly spirits, and Ahriman, to equal him, made one containing evil spirits, and then break them together, thus liberating the good and bad spirits to engage in eternal conflict. Ahriman also made the wolves and tigers, and serpents and venomous insects to annoy the good. By eating a certain kind of fruit, he transformed himself into a serpent and went gliding upon the earth to tempt human beings. His devils entered the bodies of men and women and produced all manner of diseases, and also sensuality, falsehood, slander and revenge. Into every part of

the world they introduced discord and death. When Ormuzd tried to lead his hosts against Ahriman, they deserted him and joined the enemy, thus enabling evil to gain and hold the ascendancy on the earth for three thousand years.

Here we see a very fair prototype for the later ideas of *devilology* which prevailed in the world, and the word Dev only needed the addition of two letters to give us our own illustrious Devil.

In the Grecian and Roman mythology, the powers of evil were not concentrated in one individual, but the honors were divided among a number. Hades or Pluto reigned in a dismal, subteranean, sulphureous region, and wore a stern, gloomy countenance, and presided over deaths and funerals. He was so much of a monster no one of the goddesses was willing to take him for a partner, so one fine day he stole upon earth and kidnapped the beautiful Proserpine, carried her off in his chariot to hell and forced her to become his wife and the queen of the infernal regions.

The Fates and Furies were attendants upon Pluto, and assisted him in the diabolical business he had in hand. Charon was an old decrepit, long-bearded fellow, and was the ferryman of hell. He waited patiently to carry over the souls of the dead, which came flocking to him promiscuously and in troops, but was particular to collect the fare from each. The monsters at the entrance of hell were those fatal evils which bring destruction and death upon mankind, and by which the inhabitants of the infernal regions were constantly augmented; these evils were care, sorrow, disease, old age, fright, famine, want; labor, sting of conscience, fire, fraud, strife, war, and death. Cerberus must not be forgotten; he was a

dog with three heads, and whose body was covered in a terrible manner with snakes instead of hair. He was the porter of hell and was begotten by Typhon.

Of the heathen nations and pagan systems of religions, all had their devils and evil spirits. But we must not dwell too long upon the devils of heathenism; our principal business is with the Devil of the Christian mythology, and to him we must now pay our particular respects. We must not suffer the ideal devils of olden times to deprive this equally mythical character of his due share of attention.

As every principal system of religion has found a necessity for a Devil, as an adversary and an antagonist to the all-ruling power of good, so Christianity must needs follow suit, and it was perhaps, fortunate for the founders of the system, that inasmuch as their original inventive powers seemed not to be of the highest order, that they were able to find plenty of models of devils already at hand, as well as all the other pagan dogmas of which the Christian system is composed and which they so freely appropriated.

The Hebrews had a very indefinite idea of the Devil, and Moses himself threw but a small amount of light upon this dark subject. Is it not a little curious that the word Devil is not mentioned once in the Jewish Bible. The word *Devils* is used four times (Lev. xvii. 7. Deut. xxxii. 17. 2 Chron. xi. 15. and Ps. cvi. 37. but means simply evil spirits or idols, and not the old archfiend, and eternal adversary of the Almighty who was especially discovered after the Old Testament was written and of which Christians are in such perpetual terror.

It is an important fact also that the name "Satan," another prominent name for the Devil, is used but five

times in the Old Testament—twice in the book of Job, once in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, in Ps. cvi. 6, and Zach. iii. 9. Except in Job, neither passage alludes to the Christian Devil, but simply implies an adversary and not a personal being. The first is the meaning of the original Hebrew word. In Chronicles it says Satan provoked David to number the people. In narrating the same occurrence in Kings, an earlier history, it says: "*God* moved him to number the people," so as both passages must be true, it follows that both beings are one, and that at all events, it was not the Christian Devil that was meant.

Before we proceed farther in this interesting history, it will perhaps be well to give the various names by which his Infernal Highness is known, so that there may be no possible doubt as to whom we have under consideration. Among the titles accorded in the Bible to this distinguished personage are, *Serpent, The Old Serpent, Satan, Devil, Lying Spirit, Lucifer, Son of the Morning, Prince of Darkness, Prince of the Power of the Air, The Adversary, The Tempter, The Accuser, Angel of the Bottomless Pit, Angel of Light, Mammon, Belial, Beelzebub, The Enemy, The Evil One, Legion, The Foul Spirit, The Unclean Spirit, The God of this World, The Great Red Dragon, Abaddon, Apollyon, The Destroyer, etc., etc.* In outside circles he has a few additional names, some of which occur to us at this moment, and we will mention them. *Zamiel, The Archfiend, Asmodeus, Mephistopheles, His Satanic Majesty, Old Nick, Old Split-foot, The Old Gentleman, The Old Scratch, The Deuce, The Dickens, Old Horny, Old Harry, Prince of Brimstone, King of the Nether Regions, The Old Boy, etc., etc.* Here is certainly an array of names quite sufficient for one poor Devil, and

if he could get anything for them, he might sell a score or two of them and have plenty left.

His Imperial Lowness is first introduced to us in the Bible story in the Garden of Eden, as a precocious snake who could stand erect on the tip of his tail and talk human language so artistically as to persude, in about fifteen minutes, the most perfect woman that ever breathed, and right fresh from the hands of her maker, to eat a fine looking specimen of apple from the workshop and the same workman, but under whose fair skin there was poison and damnation enough to perpetually curse countless millions of human beings who for thousands of years succeeded her. That was indeed a villainous but cunning old snake to thus completely thwart the King of Heaven, the Eternal God, of all knowledge and power, and the Maker and Ruler of Heaven and Earth; and it was a most pernicious and deadly kind of fruit that could, by simply being masticated by our grandmother, thus inexorably damn to hopeless, perpetual and excruciating torture countless quintillions of her offspring. Why did God ever make such a snake? Why did he ever make such an apple? Why did he ever make such a woman? Why should he have created the possibilities for such a terrible catastrophe? How could he have made such an egregious blunder? Who is able to answer these momentous questions? It is a painful subject to dwell upon, and let us leave it at once.

There is consolation in knowing (though it is rather inadequate to the occasion) that the old serpent who thus defeated God, and ruined the world by one master-stroke of cunning, was condemned to crawl on his belly, to eat dust, and to have the organs of speech

taken from him. And we are glad to be able to state to you on this occasion that the old serpent has never stood on his tail nor spoken a word since he performed that apple trick. We fear, however, he has not observed the sentence about eating dust. No naturalist, no snake hunter, nor snake charmer has in these six thousand years ever caught a snake eating dust, but they have frequently been detected in swallowing frogs, toads, mice, birds, etc., and it has been observed, too, that this villainous beast always insists upon taking his food alive. We would be willing to sign a petition to the high court of heaven that this vile enemy of God and man be made to abide by the original sentence and eat nothing but dust.

Some have had the audacity, or the hardihood, to doubt whether this snake that so early engaged in the apple business and thus cornered the market, was identically the same Devil who afterwards entered into a speculation with God in the matter of Job, the putting of his children to death, killing off all his live stock and covering him from head to foot with the most terrible boils that was ever heard of, and the same muscular Devil, who, on a later occasion transported the Son of God to the top of a very high mountain and also to the highest pinnacle of the temple; but our reliable, disinterested clergymen, who were better posted in all matters pertaining to the Devil, than any of the rest of us, assure us in the most unmistakable manner that such is the fact, and we are not at liberty to doubt them.

It is to be regretted that, though the devilish snake was doomed to crawl on the face of the earth and not to speak a loud word from that time forth, still matters did not move smoothly between God and

man. Although the serpent was placed at such great disadvantage, he seemed to still have power enough to pervert the whole human race and to alienate them from God to such a degree, that he got very sick of the enterprise und heartily wished he had never undertaken it. He saw no way out of the muddle he had gotten into. except to drown the entire human race and all the animal kingdom, save the fishes and one man and his family. These were heroic measures, truly, but the case was desperate. Mankind was rapidly going to the Devil any way, and he decided to send them all by water.

It must have been an interesting sight to those old antediluvians who had lived to the mature age of nine hundred years and over, to see the animals gathing from all quarters of the earth, of however diverse nature and characteristics, filing into the Ark two by two, wolves and lambs, tigers and kids, hawks and chickens, turkeys and grasshoppers, all in the most fraternal and amicable manner, disposing of themselves in the Ark and stowing themselves away like cord-wood, and waiting for God to shut them in, in pitch darkness, there to remain some thirteen months. It is presumable the serpent or the Devil—whichever he may have been—was shrewd enough to get into the ark before the door was closed, for we see that the serpent still lives and that the Devil has been in a flourishing condition ever since.

Could he have been drowned beyond all power of resuscitation, we could have been better reconciled to the merciless drowning of the lambs, the kittens, the fawns, the cows, the horses, the camels, the Guinea-pigs, the squirrels, the larks, the mocking-birds, the bob-o-links, the honey-bees and the butterflies, none

of which had done any wrong, so far as we are informed; had the Devil been drowned, we could have submitted to the necessary loss of life on the other hand; but to realize that they were all drowned, and he kept alive, excites our extreme indignation.

It is to be further regretted, that this immense outlay of life and treasure resulted in so little benefit to either God or man, for we are expressly informed that the world went on just as bad after, as before. The Devil still ruled the hearts of men, thus showing himself, as he has on many other occasions, the smarter of the two.

Although very little is said of the Devil for some hundreds of years after that extensive freshet, we are not to suppose he was asleep or idle. He is said ever to be on the alert, and to let no opportunity pass where he can "turn an honest penny," or to do any little job in his line of business. Judging from the history of the events occurring between the flood and Job's time, and the amount of butchery and killing and the various other crimes committed by God's peculiar people, as well as the rest of the world, we may well suppose he was steadily improving the golden moments as they passed.

Under the name of Satan, the Devil is prominently brought to our notice in the book of Job, and he is there represented as a very respectable gentleman—vastly improved in character and circumstances from the time, when in the garden of Eden he was cursed to crawl upon his belly all the days of his life. At the time of that cursing, it may be supposed God had the utmost contempt for him, and despised him above all living beings; but when he is introduced to us in Job, there seems to be great cordiality between

the two, we are led to suppose that the Devil was the Son of God, or at least a close and intimate friend. On "a day when the children of God came to present themselves before the Lord, that Satan came also among them" (Job. i. 6). The Lord saluted him in a friendly manner, and asked him whence he came. Satan answered: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Then the Lord asked him: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" Satan answered this question in a true Yankee fashion, by asking another: "Dost Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made a hedge about him, about his house, and about all that he has on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. Put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." To this banter the Lord, with much magnanimity towards the Devil, (more, surely, than to the good man Job,) said: "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand." Upon this Satan took his leave, to enter upon the work of depriving the good man of his wealth, according to God's suggestion.

This interview and conversation between God and the Devil suggests a few thoughts. First. As to the sons of God: who were they? Where did they come from? How many sons had he? Who were their mothers? Were they legitimate or illegitimate? What was their occupation? Where did they go to? Were they divine or human, or half and half? Was Satan one of them? Where are they at the present time?

Second. How is it that the Lord, who is omniscient and sees and knows all things, should be under the necessity of asking the Devil where he came from? Is he not expected to know where everybody is at all times, especially his arch-enemy, who is constantly working against him? If God is everywhere present, and his all-seeing eye is always open, how is it, if Satan was constantly walking up and down the earth, that God did not sometimes meet him? It would seem that Satan was an excellent traveler, and was looking after the affairs of men better than God was.

Third. While it must be set down as rather of a cruel and dishonorable business for God and the Devil to thus plot against a righteous man like Job who had discharged his duty in all respects, that from the account, the ignominy and dishonor of the transaction attaches equally to the two; in fact, God would seem to be the most culpable, for it was he who first called the Devil's attention to the man Job, and it was he who commissioned the Devil to despoil him.

Fourth. It is painful to read the account that follows; how thoroughly Satan executed the commission he had received, and how the heart of good old Job was made sore by the loss of his oxen, his sheep, his camels, his servants, and finally his sons and daughters. It is no wonder that in his great grief he arose and tore his mantle. Had he torn it into shreds, no one could have blamed him. But he endured it all manfully, and neither cursed nor blamed. It would seem that even the Devil's heart ought to have been touched by the good old man's afflictions, and the noble resignation with which he bore them, that he

would have ceased his persecutions. We must say in all the foul deeds that are laid to the Devil, this is really the meanest of any that is proved against him. Such ignoble conduct cannot be excused even in a devil. We must remember however, that God had given his consent to it all, and knew all about it. Whatever dishonor the Devil gained in that nefarious business, God must share with him.

It seems, further along, that the sons of God came together to hold another re-union and Satan came also to present himself before the Lord as before, when God and he had another conversation about the afflicted Job. God asked him again where he came from and received the same answer as before. He asked the Devil again what he thought of Job, and admitted that the Devil had induced him to bring afflictions upon the poor old man without the slightest cause. The Devil's answer was much as before; "Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. Put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse thee to thy face." Then said God, "Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life." He virtually said, do what you please with the old man; afflict him and torment him as much as you like, so that you don't quite take his life. Upon this the Devil again took his departure to carry out this new commission. Then follows the recital of the bodily sufferings that were visited upon that patient, good man in the shape of boils all over his body from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet.

Any person who has had a good sized boil on any part of the body, well knows the sufferings it produces. No boil has ever yet found the right place to

locate to be out of the way. One boil has always been found sufficient at a time; we never saw a person who wished two at once. One was quite all he wished to attend to. But think of a poor victim being covered, all over from head to foot. Just think of the intense pain and anguish they must produce when coming to a head; and when they got to running what a time the poor man must have had. We pity him now, from the bottom of our heart. Of all the sufferings poor mortals have ever been afflicted with, we can imagine nothing worse; and to be kept up so long. O, Dear! it is a painful subject and we cannot dwell upon it longer. How a decent Devil or a good God could stand by and thus wantonly afflict a poor, hapless mortal, has always been a mystery to us. For the credit and good name of God and the Devil both, we have always wished that the picture here presented was overdrawn. We would much rather that the writer of the drama or story had misstated the facts, than to think them truly given. If it is a fact that the whole human family are in the hands of such a God and such a Devil, we would call upon the angels to pity and weep.

After this discreditable piece of business but little is said about the Devil in the older part of the Bible.

Although God's chosen people seemed at all times to be very full of the Devil, his name is seldom mentioned till we reach the New Testament, and then the Devil is served up in almost every conceivable style. At one time he tempts God, or the Son of God—as you choose—another time he takes him to the pinnacle of the temple; again he conveys him to the top of a very high mountain where he shows him all the kingdoms on both sides of the globe; (we have thought

no one but a Devil could perform this difficult feat); then he gets into a great many different persons; one was the wild man among the tombs. If the imp was big enough and strong enough to carry a god or a man around it would seem singular how he could get into a person. In the wild man alluded to, he seems to have entered very extensively, for when he came out there was enough of him to occupy two thousand swine. Whether there were two thousand of the devils that got into the man, or whether he divided up into two thousand parts when he entered the swine has not yet been settled. Seven of him, or seven of some devils, seem to have got into Mary Magdalene, but how they could make themselves comfortable in such a locality is a little mysterious. Jesus, however, made them come out; in fact he made short work of dislodging devils. If he possessed such power over them it seems very strange why he did not utterly demolish them, destroy them, or any way to get rid of them.

If Jesus left his bright, happy home in heaven to come down to this gloomy world of ours to make human beings happy, why did he not with one blow, kill the Devil, the cause of all the evil and trouble the world has ever known? This would have been a work worthy of a God indeed, and vastly more effective than simply dying on the cross. If, however, God wished to have a Devil in the first place, and saw fit to make him, he probably has his reasons for preserving his life.

It is a debatable question whether the Devil is not a very serviceable being to God, and whether there is not a kind of partnership between them. In the case of Job, they seemed to operate in a joint interest and

sible person under any obligation to believe a writer when he states such great improbabilities, especially when he can be convicted of a score of mis-statements in other lesser matters ? Is there any virtue in believing a falsehood at any time ?

We do not say that Jesus never lived, but we do say there is no proof that he did. When we consider that what are called the "four gospels" might very easily have been written by Eusebius or some of the other early fathers, priests or monks who were anxious to transplant the older pagan mythologies of the East into Judea and to re-localize the antique notions of India, Persia and Egypt, and when it is known to be a fact that almost every incident narrated in the life of Jesus had its prototype more than five hundred years earlier, in Christna, Buddha, Prometheus and many others, it is more easy for a plain, matter-of-fact man, who is not biased by early education, to think the whole story a borrowed one, rather than that the same events of half a millennium before should take place over again. Can we justly ascribe to Jesus, priority and originality for sentiments and doctrines which were positively known to have been taught hundreds of years earlier by the Essenes of Alexandria, and other localities?

But admitting that Jesus did live, and there were doubtless many by the name, the same as there are at this day in Spain and Mexico, and as for two thousand years there have been Jameses and Joshuas, he was only a man who was begotten and born like other human beings, who lived and died like them, and after he was dead did not arise again and go sailing up bodily in the air where it is cold enough to freeze a man through and through in five minutes. His praises, his wonders

and his super-humanity have been so long sung and reiterated that thousands of people like Mr. Brown have absolutely got to believe that such a remarkable person once lived on the earth, and that he was God and made the Universe.

There is no lack of instances where human beings of only ordinary traits of character, have had great honors thrust upon them, and especially after death have been deified and have been elevated to a niche of great eminence in the temple of adulation. In olden times it was very common, and even in the last century there has been plenty of it. How Napoleon Bonaparte has been revered and magnified in all his excellent qualities far beyond the reality, constituting him a hero, a wonder and almost a demi-god, while his enemies saw little in him to admire. How our own Washington, by being extolled, be-praised, and always spoken of as a perfect, faultless individual, is now revered by millions far beyond his real merits. One of the tendencies of the human mind, especially the ignorant and superstitious portion, is to "hero-worship." This, however, will gradually pass away, as intelligence and correct thinking gain sway in the world.

If Jesus did live, and if he said every word that is attributed to him, why should he be credited with great power and wisdom, and with divinity itself, when he uttered no better, no wiser, no more God-like sayings, than Zoroaster, Buddha, Christna, Confucius, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and many others who lived hundreds of years before him? Is there a virtue in selecting one individual who has lived in the past, and in according to him all the wisdom, all the excellence and all the adorable characteristics that

belong equally as much, to say the least, to numerous other individuals? Is it justice or equity to rob one individual or many individuals, of the honor and credit to which they are fairly entitled, and to bestow it upon another no more worthy than themselves?

Our friend quotes Theodore Parker. It is rather a new thing for Christians to quote him to sustain their institution. They neither recognized him as a Christian while he lived, nor had scarcely a kind word to say of him when he died. To them he was an Infidel almost equal to Paine or Voltaire. Had we room, we think we could quote many of Mr. Parker's sayings which Mr. Brown would hardly endorse. Theodore Parker was a great man, and was much farther advanced in mental freedom and boldness than the great majority of those around him; but he, too, like Mr. Brown, had an excessive amount of veneration, and he fancied he saw in the character of Jesus a great deal to love and admire.

If Parker did say, on a certain occasion, when he had a special point to make, that "the Christianity of Christ is the highest and most perfect ideal ever presented to the longing eyes of man," it was an extravagant expression, unfounded in truth. We would like to have Mr. Brown, or any other individual, show wherein the morals or inculcations of Jesus were any higher or purer than those taught and believed by the persons just named, none of whom claimed to be God. It is just as easy for the admirers and worshipers of Jesus to accord undue reverence to him, as it is for the worshipers of Buddha, Christna or Mahomet to do the same by them. Probably no Christian devotee can exceed the high degree of adoration which the several followers of these great leaders feel

towards their beau-ideals. We who are without the circle can see that all are equally mistaken, and that virtue attaches to one no more than another for believing what is untrue.

If Christianity possesses all the excellence and virtue the world has ever known, is it not singular that it has produced more intolerance, more persecution, more bloodshed and more death, than any and all other religions the world has ever known? That this has been the case, and that the history of Christianity has been written in blood, can be easily shown.

Lord Bacon was truly a wise and a great man, and we will be glad if Christians ever become willing to accept all the positions he arrived at; but when he said, "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion," it only proves that even great minds can err. How is it to-day? The greatest minds of the age, the ripest scholars, the soundest thinkers, and the most learned scientists, are those who have the least faith in theology, revealed religion and a personal God. In this category are enrolled Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Faraday, Proctor, Helmholtz, Buchner, Schmidt, Draper, Fiske, and numerous others of less distinction; while in the opposite column are found Moody and Sankey, Mrs. Grundy, Mrs. Partington, Erastus F. Brown, and unfortunately, too many more.

If it is a virtue for Mr. Brown to believe in his myth, it is equally a virtue for the little girl who hangs up her stocking, to believe in her myth, Santa Claus. And it is not strange, that, when she was told by her mother, that she was now getting large

enough to lay aside her dolls and playthings, and be a woman; that there was no such person as Santa Claus, that, when her cherished ideals were thus so cruelly destroyed, she should reply in this wise: "Now Ma! If you have been telling me a story all this time, about Santa Claus, how do I know but you have been telling me a story about Jesus, too? If there is no Santa Claus, I don't believe there is any Jesus Christ either; there is as much proof of one as the other." And the little child was about right. If, in the opinion of her mother, it was time for her to lay aside childishness and error, and not believe longer in myths and fallacies, is it not also time for Mr. Brown and thousands of others to do the same, and embrace the universal truths which exist in nature and reason, and which depend neither upon Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Christna, Plato, Aristotle, Christ, Mahomet, Luther, nor Joseph Smith, bnt which exist inherently and eternally in the boundless Universe. May he, and numerous others, early come to see the truth as it is clearly brought to light by science and reason, which cause myths, superstition, and fables to step to the rear and to return to the shades of oblivion.

Read THE TRUTH SEEKER; a live Journal devoted to Science, Morals, and Freethought. Price per year $2.00 for six months $1.00, for three months 50cts.

Circulate the TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS containing from four to seventy-five pages each. Price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount in quantity.

Sow broadcast the TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS four cents per dozen, 25cts., per 100, $2.00, per 1.000, all sent post-paid. Address

D. M. BENNETT, 335 Broadway, N. Y.

[Truth Seeker Tracts. No. 77.]

The Fear of Death.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the unfortunate legacies which the Christian religion has bequeathed to mankind is the fear of death and a perpetual dread that the condition of existence after this life is one of unhappiness and ceaseless torment. Among all the religions of the world, in all lands, and in all systems of faith, none have inculcated with such fears and apprehensions of death and what is to succeed it, as Christianity has done and is still doing. The priests—the founders and promulgators of Christianity—have so persistently held up to the credulous gaze of the masses, a picture of a cruel and revengeful God, who, not content with the afflictions, adversities and trials which make up much of the experience of his creatures in this life. has devised that their existence shall not terminate with death, but that they shall live eternally, and the far greater portion be doomed to endless torture and the most terrible sufferings of which the mind is capa-

ble of conceiving. They have painted the lurid flames of hell, the horrid demons which preside there, and the utter wretchedness of the damned in such vivid colors, that the ignorant multitudes have accepted it all as truth, and it is not strange that, for many hundreds of years, God has been looked upon as a most cruel and merciless tyrant who created a devil or devils to lead his children astray, and then to torture them through the endless ages of eternity for the same. It is not strange that, believing this, death has been so dreaded, and feared, as the greatest enemy of the race.

The vindictive character which has been attributed to Deity, the malicious disposition assigned to his important agent, the Devil, the forebodings of a terrible day of judgment, when all who ever lived upon the earth are to be gathered together and judged, the principal portion to be hopelessly doomed to the agonies of a fearful, never-ending hell, have been accepted by millions of human beings as truths, and have caused more unhappiness to the race than all other creeds in the world. Death has been made replete with terror and the future existence with unutterable fear and apprehension. Nothing has so embittered life; nothing has so detracted from the comparative happiness human beings might have enjoyed as these abhorrent doctrines have done. It is impossible to compute the fear, the terror and the dread that the credulous and confiding have been made to suffer from this source. Doubts and most harrowing fears have tortured the minds of unnumbered millions of our race. Their own future condition has not only been a matter of the most painful anxiety to them, but the welfare of loved friends and

companions, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children has been of the most intense interest, with the most distressing misgivings. Yes, these dreadful fears and forebodings have embittered the happiness and destroyed the comfort of immense numbers of human beings! Could the mental agony be computed which the belief in a vindictive God, a cruel Devil and a burning hell had produced where the Christian religion has prevailed, it would be enough to appall the stoutest hearts and awaken the strongest condemnation against such a monstrous creed.

Not only have these doctrines operated to destroy the peace of mind of individuals, but the belief in a vindictive, revengeful God—who has been the source of the most relentless and cruel persecutions, which man has been made to suffer—the belief in a merciless God has made cruel and blood-thirsty worshipers. It has overthrown mental liberty, individual right and personal safety. It has caused human blood to flow in rivers, and been the pretext for the taking of human life in numbers variously estimated at from seventy-five millions to one hundred and fifty millions of the race. The record is the most fearful of any portions of man's history. Most truly did Robert G. Ingersoll, in one of his bursts of eloquence, exclaim: "There can be little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven," and with equal truth may it be said, *there can be little happiness for the human race who believe in a creative God, who consigns his creatures to the torments of a never ending hell.*

How many thousands, and millions, have passed through life in a perfect dread of the terrible doom they feared awaited them at death! How they have

shuddered and trembled at the very thought of passing from this world! In their waking and sleeping hours it has been a constant nightmare to them. How many parents have feared lest when the vale is passed that their beloved children will be forever separated from themselves—one or two, possibly, being admitted within the gates of the beautiful city, while the larger portion are cast down into the horrid, sulphurous gulf. How many husbands and wives, relations and friends, acquaintances and strangers have been thus racked by fears, tortured by forebodings, and haunted with misgivings in contemplating the probable fearful destiny which awaited them! How many simple, honest-hearted people have passed wretched lives by this constant fear of death and eternity! Whether they have secured a passport that will take them safely into the regions of happiness, or whether their doom is down in the prisons of the damned, is the one ever-recurring question which they are unable to solve and which is such a constant source of apprehension and mental agony.

If the reader will pardon us for a few moments we will make a few extracts from the sermons of Christian Clergymen and Christian writers, touching the subject of hell, that it may be better understood whence come the terrors and harrowing fears to which we have alluded.

In Baxter's "Saint's Rest," he thus rapturously addresses himself to sinners:

"Your torment shall be universal. . . . The soul and the body shall each have its torments. The guilt of their sins will be to damned souls like tinder to gunpowder, to make the flames of hell take hold of them with fury. . . . The eyes shall be tortured with sights of

horror, and hosts of devils and damned souls. The ears shall be tortured with the howlings and curses of their companions in torments. Their smell shall be tortured with the fumes of brimstone, and the liquid mass of eternal fire shall prey upon every part. . . . No drop of water shall be allowed to cool their tongues; no moment of respite permitted to relieve their agonies."

The saintly Bunyan gives this delectable picture:

"All the devils in hell will be with thee howling and roaring, screeching and yelling in such a hideous manner, that thou wilt be at thy wit's end, and be ready to run stark mad again from anguish and torment. . . . Here thou must lie and fry, and scorch, and broil, and burn for evermore."

The cherished divine, Jonathan Edwards, among a vast amount he uttered upon this favorite topic of hell, said:

"The saints in glory will be far more sensible how dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are, yet this will be no occasion of grief to them, but rejoicing. They will not be sorry for the damned; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them, but on the contrary, when they see this sight, it will occasion rejoicing, and excite them to joyful praises."

The Rev. Mr. Benson, a prominent Methodist commentator of England, uses this language:

"Infinite justice arrests their guilty souls and confines them in the dark prisons of hell, till they have satisfied all the demands by their personal sufferings, which, alas! they never can do. . . . God is present in hell in his infinite justice and almighty wrath as an unquenchable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink in everlasting torture. His fiery indignation kindles and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being and renders all their powers most acutely sensible, thus

setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it *cut most intolerably deep.* He will exert *all* his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their natures will admit. . . . Number the stars in the firmament, the drops of rain, the sands on the sea shore, and when thou hast finished the calculation, sit down and number all the ages of woe. Let every star, every drop every grain of sand, represent *one million of tormentiny ages;* and know that as many more millions still remain behind, and yet as many more behind them, and so on without end."

The Rev. Mr. Ambrose, in a sermon on Dooms-day, drew this picture:

"When the damned have drunken down whole draughts of brimstone one day, they must do the same another day. The eye shall be tormented with the sight of devils; the ears with the hideous yellings and outcries of the *damned in flames*; the nostrils shall be smothered, as it were, with brimstone; the tongue, the hand, the foot and every part shall *fry in flames.*"

The Rev. Mr. Emmons, a sound orthodox, in his "Volume of Sermons," has this choice bit:

"The happiness of the elect in heaven will in part consist in watching the torments of the damned in hell. And among these it may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends on earth. One part of the business of the blest is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy who, instead of taking the part of those miserable objects will sing, 'Amen, hallelujah; praise the Lord.'"

An Evangelical poet, catching the fiery refrain, thus sweetly sings:

Clattering of iron, and the clank of chains:
The clang of lashing whips, shrill shrieks and groans,
Loud, ceaseless howlings, cries and piercing moans,

Meanwhile, as if but light were all their pain,
Legions of devils bound themselves in chains.
Tormented and tormentors, o'er them shake,
Thongs and forked iron in the burning lake,
Belching eternal flames, and wreathed with spires
Of curling serpents rouse the brimstone fires,
With whips of fiery scorpions, scourge their slaves,
And in their faces dash the livid waves."

The Rev. Mr. Emmons again says:

"When they (the saints) see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them more a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them in making them so to differ. The sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever."

"Where saints and angels from their blest abode,
Chanting loud hallelujahs to their God,
Look down on sinners in the realm of woe,
And draw fresh pleasures from the scenes below."

The Rev. Thomas Bolton thus descants upon the bliss of the future life:

"The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her *ungodly husband*. The godly husband shall say, *Amen*! to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom. The godly parent shall say hallelujah! at the passing of the sentence upon the ungodly child. And the godly child, shall, from his heart, approve the damnation of his wicked parents, who begot him, and the mother who bore him."

The Rev. Thomas Vincent, orthodox, thus touched the beautiful picture:

"This will fill them (the saints) with *astonishing admiration* and wondering joy, when they see some of their near relatives going to hell; their fathers, their mothers, their children, their husbands, their wives, their human friends and companions, while they themselves are

saved. . . . Those affections they now have for relatives *out* of Christ, will *cease*, and they will not have the least trouble to see them sentenced to hell *and thrust into the fiery furnace.*"

In one of the former publications of the American Tract Society, is the following, from Rev. James Smith :

"The fire of hell is such, that multitudes of tears will not quench it, and length of time will not burn it out. The wrath of God abideth on the rejector of Christ. (John, iii. 36.) O eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we have to measure the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the flame of the pit. (Isaiah, xxx. 33.) And where shall we find waters to quench those flames? Oh eternity! If all the body of the earth and the sea were turned to sand, and all the space up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and if a little bird should come once every thousand years and take away in her bill but a single grain from off that heap of sand, what numberless years and ages must be spent before the whole of that vast quantity would be carried away; yet, even if at the end of that time the sinner might come out of hell, there might be some hope; but that word *Forever*, breaks the heart. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.'"

Pollock's artistic touches to this lovely picture, are familiar to many :

"God in the grasp
Of his almighty strength, took them upraised,
And threw them down into the yawning pit
Of bottomless perdition, ruined, damned,
Fast bound in chains of darkness evermore,
The second death and the undying worm,
Opening their horrid jaws with hideous yell,
Falling, received their everlasting prey.
A groan returned, as down they sunk, and sunk,
And ever sunk among the utter dark;

A groan returned—the righteous heard the groan,
The groan of all the reprobate, when first
They felt damnation sure, and heard hell close!"

This delicate delineation of the loveliness of hell, is from the pen of the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.R.R., and was published by authority in England, and was part of the instruction designed for the young:

"We know how far it is to the middle of the earth; it is just four thousand miles; so if hell is in the middle of the earth, it is four thousand miles to the horrible, prison of hell. Down in this place is a terrific noise. Listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions and millions of tormented creatures, mad with the fury of hell! Oh! the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair, from millions on millions! There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth, and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God's anger, which shakes hell to its foundations. But there is another sound. There is in hell a sound like that of many waters. It is as if all the rivers and oceans of the world were pouring themselves with a great splash down on the floor of hell. Is it, then, really the sound of waters? It is. Are the rivers and oceans of the earth pouring themselves into hell? No. What is it, then? It is the sound of oceans of tears running down from countless millions of eyes. They cry forever and ever. They cry because the sulphurous smoke torments their eyes. They cry because they are in darkness. They cry because they have lost the beautiful heaven. They cry because the sharp fire burns them. . . . The roof is red hot; the walls are red hot; the floor is like a thick sheet of red hot iron. See, on the middle of that red hot iron floor stands a girl. She looks about sixteen years of age. She has neither shoes nor stockings on her feet. The door of this room has never been opened since she first set her feet on this red hot floor. Now she sees the door opening. She rushes forward. She has

gone down upon her knees upon the red hot floor. Listen, she speaks. She says: 'I have been standing with my bare feet on this red-hot floor for years. Day and night my only standing place has been this red-hot floor. Sleep never came on me for a moment, that I might forget this horrible burning floor. Look at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment—only for a short moment. Oh; that in this endless eternity of years, I might forget the pain only for one single moment.' The Devil answers her question. 'Do you ask for a moment—for one moment to forget your pain? No, not for one single moment during the never-ending eternity of years, shall you ever leave this red-hot floor.'

The reader will doubtless excuse us from making any further quotations of this description. These are but a fair sample of the abominable inculcations which beings in human shape, and called "divines," "men of God," "Holy men," etc., for centuries regaled their credulous hearers and required them to believe. Is it strange that those who can believe such horrible drivel as this should entertain a dread of the future life and that their happiness in this life was embittered in contemplating existence in the next?

Fortunately this abhorrent belief in an eternity of agony for the far greater portion of the human race is not entertained over the entire world. Christianity is the only religion of the hundreds that make up the total of human creeds that teaches a hell of endless torture. The Mohammedans have a modified hell, but it is not endless. Brahmanism recognizes degrees of future unhappiness, but the extremest of their views in this direction bears no comparison with the terrors of the Christian hell. The same may be said of the theology of the Egyptians, Grecians, and

Wide was the place,
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath I saw a lake of burning fire,
With tempest tossed perpetually, and still
The waves of fiery darkness, 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholly sort; and over head,
And all around, wind warred with wind, storm howled
To storm, and lightning, forked lightning, crossed,
And thunder answered thunder, muttering sounds
Of sullen wrath; and as far as sight could pierce,
Or down descend in caves of hopeless depth,
Through all that dungeon of unfading fire,
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed;
Forever wasting, yet enduring still;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead."

"O'er their heads a bowless cloud,
Of indignation hung; a cloud it was
Of thick and utter darkness, rolling, like
An ocean, tides of livid, pitchy flame;
With thunders charged, and lightnings ruinous,
And red with forked vengeance, such as wounds
The soul; and full of angry shapes of wrath,
And eddies whirling with tumultuous fire,
And forms of terror raving to and fro,
And monsters, unimagined heretofore
By guilty men in dreams before their death,
From horrid to more horrid changing still
In hideous movement through that stormy gulf."

Those who are fond of pictures of this kind can be pleased to their heart's content in the Christian theology of the past few centuries.

It is thought strange by many, why men of education and intelligence will continue to teach such monstrous ideas about a vindictive God, a malicious Devil, and a seething, foaming hell; but when the fact is borne in mind that in the words of the Rev. Dr. Sew-

ell, already quoted, "On this main fact must rest the foundation of all Christian ethics," the reason can be understood. This is the base on which the structure of Christian theology is builded—a vindictive God, angry with the whole human race, a villainous but subservient Devil in his employ, and a hell, of the description just given, to burn poor wretches in—and here you have the bulk of Christianity. This is the principal nourishment which these blatant and extra pious clergy for hundreds of years been have doling out to the simple children, small and large, who devoutly listen to them Sunday after Sunday, month after month and year after year.

These themes are their principal stock in trade. How could the clergy get along without a Devil or a hell? The Devil is their best friend. It is to escape his clutches that induces millions of Christian dupes to support this idle, unproductive but privileged class of priests and bishops, enabling them to dress in fine linen and broadcloth; to eat the best the land affords, to live in splendid mansions of brown-stone and pressed brick; and all without lifting a finger or soiling their hands to earn a penny of the money which they cost. Were it not for this very convenient Devil who serves them so well, they would be under the necessity of turning their attention in other directions, and devising some other, but perhaps more laborious, means of obtaining a livelihood.

Do you realize, kind Friends, what the promulgation of the repulsive doctrines we have under consideration, has cost, and is costing the world? In our own country we have over sixty thousand priests, who with more or less fervor are preaching this kind of gospel, and as many churches in which it is listen-

ed to. This is done at an annual expense of $200,000,000. In Christendom there are not less than 300,000 priests of all kinds, who preach the Devil, and it costs the poor people who pay for this kind of amusement the enormous sum of $1,000,000,000 annually. Could not this amount of wealth be used where it would do vastly more good to the race? Is it so important that his Satanic Majesty should be held up in all his deformity before the trembling millions, that this amount of treasure, wrung from the weary muscles and the aching backs of the toiling, credulous masses, should year after year, and century after century, be worse than thrown away? Cannot some theme more pleasing and interesting than the Devil, with his hoofs, horns and tail, be delivered to the people?

It has doubtless been observed by the most of you, who are pious enough to attend Church, that his Satanic Majesty is, of late years, receiving the "cold shoulder" from the clergy, who have been so much indebted to him in the past. They say far less about the Devil now than twenty-five years ago; and they mix far less of sulphur in the gospel pap which they so affectionately feed to the babes of grace. The fact is the mental stomach of the public has become so sensitive that it rejects such highly seasoned diet as the wrath of God and brimstone make when duly blended together. It requires something milder, and we see the Doctors of Divinity, like the Doctors of Medicine, hasten to furnish their patients with such boluses and mixtures as they are willing to accept and *pay* for.

Clergymen, like other professionals and tradesmen, are very anxious to please their patrons, and are willing to furnish just such commodities as are in de-

mand. They are getting to take a very sensible view of the matter, and virtually they talk to their customers in this wise: "We wish to please you; you pay us your money, and we desire you to have just what you want. If you do not like so much sulphur, we can just as easily give you less; in fact, we think we can soon dispense with it altogether. If you object to the Devil, we will keep him behind the curtain, and even not exhibit him at all, if you say so. We are anxious to please our customers as nearly as we can; we are determined to study the tastes of those who patronize our establishment."

Remarks, practically like these, were made to a congregation in this city about three weeks ago, by a pastor who had just newly been called to fill the pulpit. He said: "Now you just let me know how you want this church run, and it shall be done just according to your instructions." He had an eye to business, and many of them are acquiring the same degree of shrewdness, and are so obliging as to try to please those who pay them. They will raise the Devil when the Devil is wanted, and make him *down*, when he is not desired. The whole truth lies just here: clergymen will preach up the Devil just so long as the people willingly accept him; and will throw him overboard, Jonah like, when he does not suit the popular demand. As it is *money* they work for, they feel it to be incumbent on them to answer the demands of that money; so when the people unitedly say: "*We want no more Devil;* we will have no more."

But what will Christianity do without a Devil and a hell? It will be worse than the play of "Hamlet," with the part of "Hamlet" omitted. This Devil, after all, cannot be given up, for the entire Christian

theology is so blended and interwoven with him, that he cannot be dropped out, nor expurgated, without ruining the entire institution.

Can any loyal Christian doubt, for a moment, the existence of a Devil—a real, simon-pure, personal Beelzebub? Did not Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, Constantine, all the popes, prelates, bishops, fathers, priests, monks, friars, pastors, preachers, elders, and deacons, from the Master, down, believe in, and teach a live, walking, real Devil? Did not Luther, the father of Protestantism, believe in a Devil? In fact, did he not absolutely see him? We have his word that he did. The Devil appeared to him in his study, and the good saint threw his ink-stand at the Devil's head. Unfortunately he missed his mark, or, at all events, he did not kill, nor seriously injure his distinguished visitor. The great man was kind enough to commit to writing, and leave as a legacy to those who succeeded him, some of his experiences with the gentleman from below.

In his work on the abuses attendant on private masses, he says that he had conferences with the Devil on that subject, passing many bitter nights, and much restless and wearisome repose; that once in particular, Satan came to him in the dead of the night, when he was just awakened out of sleep. "The Devil," says Luther, "knows well enough, how to construct his arguments, and to urge them with the skill of a master. He delivers himself with a grave and yet shrill voice. Nor does he use circumlocutions and beat about the bush; but excels in forcible statements and quick rejoinders. I no longer wonder that the persons whom he assails in this way are occasionally found dead in their beds. He is able to compress and throttle, and

more than once he has so assaulted me and driven my soul into a corner, that I felt as if the next moment it must leave my body. I am of the opinion that Gesner and Œcolampadius came in that manner to their deaths. The Devil's manner of opening a debate is pleasant enough, but he soon urges things so peremptorily that the respondent in a short time knows not how to acquit himself."

Here is positive testimony from the highest Christian source that there is a Devil, and that he is very sociable, argumentative and able in discussion. No Christian can doubt Luther's testimony on this very important subject.

We have also the positive testimony of Swedenborg and Blomberg that there is a Devil for they had seen him and conversed with him. Our own Joseph Smith, too, the Mormon Prophet, a man who could not be induced to make the slightest misrepresentation, avers that he not only saw the Devil, but had a personal conflict with him over those golden plates on which the Mormon Bible was engraved. The Devil was determined to get the plates away from the Prophet and he struggled hard to accomplish it, but for once, he found his match; Joseph was too much for the Archfiend, and he held on to the plates, compelling the Evil One to retire in disgrace.

There are plenty of others, divines and undivines, who positively assert that they have seen the Devil, and came in close contact with him. Yes, they not only saw him, but they smelt him, also. Some of the goatish smell was about him, but the odor of sulphur predominated. (It is asserted that he uses no cologne water nor "rosadora," to overcome his disagreeable smells.)

Notwithstanding the numbers who have seen him, there are several points as to his personality that are not clearly settled. There is some doubt about his complexion, the color of his eyes, the length of his horns, the dimensions of his tail, his avoirdupois, his exact height; whether he parts his hair in the middle; whether his clothes are in the latest fashion, whether it is his right or left foot that is cloven; whether on the other, he wears a boot or a gaiter; whether his coat is *dress* or *sack;* whether he regards Moody and Sankey's style of snatching souls from his grasp, is the most effective that can be devised; whether he is in favor of a "third term," whether he believes Henry Ward Beecher knows anything about Elizabeth, and whether Henry is to be believed under oath.

It has been reported by some of these interviewers that the Devil is cross-eyed, in his near eye; but we have reason to think it an unmitigated slander, put into circulation by his enemies. We think if this had been the case, Martin Luther, who was a very observing man, would have discovered it and reported the same. It cannot easily be supposed that he could hold heated arguments and discussions with the Devil, wherein the major and minor propositions were duly presented; the premises laid down according to rule, and he not have discovered that his celebrated opponent was cross-eyed. The case is not presumable.

One of the saddest features in the whole history of the Devil, is his operations in the line of witchcraft. We will not say he is responsible for the great wrongs that have been committed in this direction; but as he was supposed to be the author and originator of all witchcraft, it is but proper we should consider it in connection with his character and existence.

The belief in witchcraft long existed in the world. As long ago as Moses penned the laws to govern the descendants of Abraham, he wrote very hard terms for those supposed to be witches. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," was one of his enactments, and this cruel, merciless sentence, for many centuries was accepted and acted upon as a decree from the throne of heaven, and many were put to death in that era, for being unfortunate enough to be judged a witch. It prevailed also in many heathen countries for hundreds of years, but it was reserved for Christianity to add the crowning touches of infamy and wrong, to this most unfortunate delusion, mania, or mental disease.

Witchcraft was held to be a supernatural power, which persons were supposed to obtain possession of, by entering into compact with the Devil. It was most frequently associated with the female character, and from that circumstance received its name.

The modern idea of witchcraft, denoting a regular league with the Evil One, dates from the rise of Christianity and obtained its higher development in the Middle Ages. At a later period, the Waldenses and other early seceders from the regular church, were accused and were cruelly and persistently persecuted for witchcraft. The highest dignitaries of the Church made no effort to check the madness that ran riot over Christian countries, but entered fully into the spirit of tormenting and putting to death, the unfortunate beings who were basely suspected of entering into compact with the Devil. Many thousands of pitiable wretches were whipped, and scourged, and drowned, and hung, and burnt, for the slightest suspicion of witchcraft being breathed against them. Many tests were devised for ascertaining whether a person

was a witch, and had entered into a league with the Prince of Darkness. Water was often resorted to. They were thrown into the same; if they floated, they were hung as witches, and if they sank, they were innocent; but nevertheless were drowned; so it was death even to be suspected.

It is lamentable that dignified courts of justice lent themselves to this nefarious business, and aided in spreading this mental malaria. Sir Matthew Hale, one of England's ablest judges in former times, sat patiently, day after day, listening to the evidence adduced to prove that certain implicated parties were in secret compact with the Devil; and in passing sentence upon the hapless victims of ignorance and superstition, whom to be accused was, almost, to be put to death.

The persecutions and infamous cruelties extended toward the miserable females, who were chiefly suspected of the crime of being witches, and of entering into unholy compact with the Evil One, were exasperated and carried out in all Christian countries. In 1484 the head of the Christian Church, Pope Innocent, issued his famous bull, in which he narrated the prevailing superstitions on the subject, and appointed commissions to examine and punish witches. From that time it became a crime especially recognized by ecclesiastical authorities. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the persecutions of witches were actively carried on all over Europe, and an incredible number of unfortunate beings lost their lives.

Colange says: "The ideas that had come to be connected with the subject, are of a remarkable character. The witch was believed to have entered into a regular engagement with the Devil, who delivered

her over to an imp or familiar spirit, to be always at her call, and to do whatever she desired of it; she, on the other hand, agreeing that she should be his after death. The witch was believed to possess the power to transport herself through the air upon a broom-stick—which was their favorite mode of travel—and of transforming herself into various forms of animal life, but more especially cats. As they are animals specially fond of slily roving around at all hours of the night, they were thought to be particularly adapted to the use of the witches. It was fully believed they possessed the power of inflicting disease upon any person whom they chose. Objects that were horrid and loathsome were regarded as chosen instruments of the witches, as dead bodies, toads, frogs, lizards, serpents, etc., etc.

A power was also assigned them over the elements, of raising storms or producing calms, and of casting malign influences over the fruits of the earth. The suspected persons were put to the most cruel tortures, in the agonies of which confessions were extorted from them which had little foundation in fact. Some confessions were, no doubt, voluntarily made, which were the result of imagination."

It is a black, bloody chapter of cruelty, oppression and wrong, which was for many centuries prosecuted in the name of religion and in behalf of a malicious Devil. It is said five thousand of these unfortunate victims of ignorance were burned at Geneva alone, and other parts of Europe, were not far behind. Voltaire states in his great work, "The Philosophical Dictionary," that over one hundred thousand witches were executed in the Christian States of Europe.

In the early settlement of this country, when the

Puritanical stock brought with them from Europe the ignorant, superstitious and religious intolerance dominant there, they brought, also, the spirit of persecution and bitterness towards "witches." This cropped out early in certain localities, and raged with fiendish hate. Many a happy home was made desolate by it; many an innocent girl was wrongfully accused of being bewitched, and was cruelly subjected to the most abhorrent tests; many were incarcerated in loathsome prisons and kept there for the grave crime of being *suspected* of holding communication with the Devil. It was a busy time, indeed, for "witch-finders," and these were usually some sanctimonious, long-faced, nasal-twanged, praying, hypocritical church member, who constituted themselves into smelling committees, to look after the young girls and spinsters, as well as old women in their neighborhood—for these were the ones supposed to be liable to enter into compact with the gentleman below. Hundreds of these innocent and interesting persons, against whom the merest breath of suspicion was whispered, were remorselessly dragged from their homes and friends, and at all hours of the day and night, and imprisoned for weeks mid the greatest discomforts and disgrace; and after formal trials of great solemnity before learned judges, and the first Christians in the country, but upon the most trivial and exparte testimony, were found guilty, and condemned to death; yes, considerable numbers of these unhappy victims of ignorance, religious superstition, zeal and intolerance were positively executed, and this less than two centuries ago, and in our glorious old State of Massachusetts.

But, thanks to dawning reason and increasing com-

mon sense, this terrible business was soon checked; trials and executions of witches were suppressed, and the evils that had been supposed to be witchcraft, soon terminated; and, except among persons of limited intelligence and reason, there has been but little belief in witches and witchcraft since. With the faith in sorcerers and sorcery, which for many centuries pervaded and cursed many countries and peoples—a belief that sorcerers were in close communion with the Devil, and by his power foretold future events, revealed hidden secrets, discovered stolen property and did many other impossible things—fortunately for the happiness of the human race, has passed away.

Witchcraft, truly, had a long, cruel and bloody history, which it is not our present purpose to sketch, but with a blush of shame for our race, we have to confess that this gigantic, almost incomparable wrong for centuries and millenniums even, was fostered and prosecuted in the name of a personal Devil! It is one of the sad, saddest blots on the page of history, which we would gladly erase, were it in our power.

Now, from what we have here uttered, about that supposed, ever-vigilant enemy of the human race, some of you may have a curiosity to know if we believe in the existence of a Devil. With all due solemnity, and with the highest regard for truth, we are compelled to confess that we do. We believe in an absolute, over-ruling Devil which has long, long cursed the world and our most unfortunate race. The name of this Devil is, IGNORANCE! He is not only a positive, real Devil, but he is the author of all the other devils that have ever existed in the imagination of man; and beside him there is none other. But thanks to the powers that be, there are forces superior

to him, and all of us, yes, all mankind who have been cursed, with the machinations of this powerful devil may easily learn to subdue him, and to gain absolute power over him. These forces are KNOWLEDGE, SCIENCE, INTELLIGENCE.

With the supremacy of these potent forces, no Devil can longer exist; but with the imps, the demons, the sprites, the gnomes, the satyrs, the genii, the furies, the gorgons, the harpies, the bogies, the hobgoblins, the dragons, all the monstrosities, as well as the witches, the fairies, the nymphs, the naiads, the undines, *and all the gods*, which, for thousands of years have existed, only, in the imagination of man, are fast passing off the stage. They were all equally inventions and creations of man, devised and believed in, when *ignorance* reigned supreme. As this power is dispelled by the forces just named, these will all take their final departure for the land of oblivion, to annoy, afflict and curse our race no more forever.

But is there no Evil in existence? Is everything good and lovely? Is there no wrong? There surely is wrong; there are evils; but they are not personages nor beings, any more than death. sin, life, truth, hope, charity, love, and many other similar qualities, which in poetry and figurative language have often been personified. None of these are personalities, none have a local, circumscribed existence. They are *principles*, and have a *universal* existence.

What, then, is Evil? It is, in three words, a *misapplication of good.* Good and evil are relative terms. There is nothing in existence but what is either, good or evil, according to the use that is made of it. Everything of which we know, or can conceive, is *good* if properly used, and it may also be *evil* if not so

used. Take fire, for instance, in cold weather, as at this season of the year, in warming our dwellings, in dispelling the cold, and in cooking our food, it is a great and indispensable good; but when misapplied, it becomes a most gigantic evil, which Chicago, Boston and thousands of other localities can fully understand.

The same with water. In the composition of our bodies and the bodies of all animal and vegetable life, for quenching thirst, for driving our mills and factories, for floating our ships and steamboats, for a highway between continents and nations, it is a great, an incalculable, an indispensable good; but when it comes in deluging rains and devasting floods, it is an evil of immense magnitude, which the people of France, our own country and nearly all countries, this year, and many others, can easily appreciate.

The same with the wind. When gentle, in the zephyr and in the breeze, enlivening and purifying the atmosphere and removing the effects of stagnation and malaria, and in driving our sailing vessels, it is a great good; but when it comes in the form of the gale, the hurricane, the whirlwind and the cyclone, it is an immense evil.

The same with all kinds of food; if used at proper time and in proper quantities they are *good*, but if used in excess they are all capable of becoming great *evils*. Most substances that are *good*, when taken into the mouth, if inserted in the eyes or ears are positive evils. So we see that everything is either good or evil, just according to the use that is made of it, and no being or person of man's imagining is necessary to represent either.

Man is an intricate organization, possessing many functions of heart, lungs, stomach, brain and other parts of the body. He has in his mental organization noble sentiments, elevated incentives, comprehensive judgment and a masterly intellect; and he also possesses lower propensities and passions. These are all good in their legitimate places and in proper proportions. Every passion subserves a good purpose when in its appropriate use, and when not mis-applied or indulged in excess. The *evil* with these qualities exists not in themselves, but in the use and application that is made of them. There are no persons so good, but what they have some imperfections, and none so bad, nor disproportionately organized, but what they possess some good.

It should be the labor of our lives to inform ourselves of the uses and abuses of everything that exists, and to learn to make a proper use of all we come in contact with. If the best use we can make of some things, is to avoid them and let them entirely alone, so be it.

These qualities, called *good and bad*, are like the plants which grow out of the earth; all are good for some purpose, but some possess more good than others. It should be our study and our purpose to cultivate the good and uproot the hurtful. We should remove the weeds, the thistles, nettles, briars and thorns which occupy the ground and contribute but little to our happiness, and encourage and give careful culture to the wheat, the corn, the esculent roots, the fruits, the flowers, and every plant that ministers to our needs and adds to our happiness.

Let us do this in the mental, as well as in the material domain, and we will need to have but a small

amount of evil in our world, and will surely have no use for a big, ugly, insinuating, tormenting, vindictive, personal Devil. When this good day comes, may we not hope the tens of thousands of public teachers and preachers who now spend their talents and their lives in promulgating ancient crudities, superstitions, falsities, fables and myths, which, as we have seen, had their origin in *ignorance*, will decide to instruct the people only in the grand, the beautiful, the elevating, the refining, the happifying and the true? Then science and reason will be our guiding stars, and the myths and the devils of the primitive ages, will hide themselves in the shades of forgetfulness.

It is possible some of the expressions and some of the arguments we have used, may to some seem harsh and uncharitable. Far be it from us to hurt "the oil and the wine" in the hearts of any individual, or to speak disrespectfully of the good that exists in any system of religion, or in any form of belief. We are free to confess, Christianity with all its excesses, with all its faults, and with all its errors, has contained and enjoined much that is good, and that great numbers of those who have embraced it, have been sincere, honest-hearted, well-disposed men and women; but who have been misled in supposing the system to be heaven-born, God-given, and angel-nurtured, when it is only made up of the dogmas, fables and mythologies of heathen nations, which existed thousands of years before Christianity came upon the stage; and all of which dogmas, as we have seen, were the figments and imaginations of the human brain.

It is now fully demonstrated that the human race

came from a low origin, on a level with the animal plane, and has, with obstructions and drawbacks, gradually progressed, until it has arrived where it is to-day ; and that it did not start high up, at a point of perfection, and since been constantly deteriorating and getting worse and worse.

All systems of religious belief which the world has contained, have possessed some good, and the adherents of all have doubtless, been sincere and aimed to discharge their duty and to accomplish commendable results. Every system has been more good, more commendable than it might have been, had it been worse. All could have been worse—more pernicious. But not a system of religion the world has yet believed in, has been free from errors ; not one that has been true. All were based upon mistaken notions of gods and devils ; all originated in fallacies and absurdities, or which were copied and adopted by one system from another.

We see the same general characteristics common to all the numerous systems that have preceeded us. All have had their gods which they worshiped; all have had their devils which they feared. Christianity originated none of this, nor a single dogma she holds to to-day. This truth might as well be plainly stated and plainly understood as to longer evade the issue. It must be met sooner or later, and there can be nothing gained by longer deferring it. Let us manfully face the music at once. It is a borrowed system—a part from Judaism, and a part from paganism, but all false together.

The foundations of it are not laid in truth. We now know the Universe was *not* started six thousand years ago, and that the earth is *not* the centre of it;

that the sun and stars do *not* revolve around it, and that the stars are *not* small brilliant objects set in a firmament or circumscribed arch, near the earth, and for "signs and seasons;" we know that Adam and Eve could *not* have been the first human pair that existed, but that human beings have lived on the earth at least forty thousand years. Similarly we know that all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity are unfounded in truth. We have seen how the crude idea of devils and gods first took position in the infantile human mind, and how they evolved and developed from age to age; and on taking a correct view of these old beliefs, we see that to suppose any of those dogmas or opinions were given from a god is wholly without foundation.

We are not one of those who think all these various systems of religion have been continuous links in the great chain of evolution, and that they all must needs be, like a wheel in an intricate machine, which could not be spared without immense damage to the entire structure. If there has been a gradual progression from one to another, (and this has not always been apparent, for there has been retrogression;) there has not been a single system of faith which could not easily have been spared from the world without serious inconvenience; and Christianity is no exception.

It is difficult to understand how the belief in any form of error can be of great utility to the race, or how the floundering of mankind, for thousands of years in the fogs, and mists and darkness of superstition and delusion, was the greatest good the race could have had, under the circumstances. It is the nature of error—however firmly planted in sincerity—to hamper, clog and fetter its adherents, and we cannot

understand how it can, under any circumstances, be the greatest good the race could enjoy. Truth is better than error; reality than imagination.

How great soever the results arising for any of the antique religions of the past may be supposed, by many, to have been, and how so ever closely they may be thought to have been connected in the great work of evolution through which the race has passed, one thing is morally certain, they are no longer adapted to the wants and needs of the present. The world has outgrown all the imperfect and fabulous theories and doctrines of olden time, and is reaching out for something better, something higher, something truer. Wise is he, who is prepared and willing to step forward with the advance guard, and help to "ring out the old and ring in the new."

The religious creeds of the world have doubtless held it back in the regions of darkness and imperfection for thousands of years; and they have not been the benefit to mankind which many imagine. The advance of the race would have been much more rapid, could truth always have been the guiding star, and not falsehood. It is, however, useless to mourn over the mistakes of the past; "Let bygones be bygones." Our duty and our labor to-day is, to come to the truth, direct, and to rid ourselves of the mistakes of the past with all possible and practicable speed, cultivating, under all circumstances, a spirit of fraternity and a desire to add as much to the welfare and happiness of humanity, as in our power.

We have reason to rejoice that the progress the world has made is as great as it is, considering the impediments and difficulties it has had to encounter; and the great mass of ignorance, superstition and

wrong it has had to meet and contend with. Light is breaking in; the myths of olden times are, one after another giving way, and in due time, if we steadily pursue our course, and keep our faces toward the goal of truth, the full effulgence of the genial sun of Reason, Science and Devotion to Humanity will ultimately illumine our pathway.

In closing, we will quote two more extracts, which seem appropriate to the line of thought we have been pursuing. The first is from our own revered Prof. Draper, that whom, in the humble opinion of your speaker, there is hardly a greater living man, and one who has done more excellent service in the cause of truth. We quote from his incomparable work, "The Intellectual Development of Europe," (p. 412.)

"All these delusions, which occupied the minds of our forefathers, and from which not even the powerful and learned were free, have totally passed away. The moonlight has now no fairies; the solitude no genii; the darkness no ghost, no goblin. There is no necromancer who can raise the dead from their graves—no one who has sold his soul to the Devil and signed the contract with his blood—no angry apparition to rebuke the crone who has disquieted him. Divination, agromancy, pyromancy, hydromancy, cheiromancy, augury, interpreting of dreams, oracles, sorcery, astrology, have all gone. It is three hundred and fifty years since the last sepulchral lamp was found, and that was at Rome. There are no gorgons, hydras, chimeras; no familliars; no incubus or succubus. The housewives of Holland no longer bring forth sooterkins by sitting over lighted chauffers. No longer do captains buy of Lapland witches, favorable winds; no longer do our churches resound with

prayers against the baleful influences of comets, though there still linger in some of our noble old rituals, forms of supplication for dry weather and rain; useless, but not unpleasing reminiscences of the past. These delusions have vanished with the night to which they appertained, yet they were the delusions of fifteen hundred years."

The second extract is from the pen of the equally meritorious Prof. Wm. Denton.

Sigh, priests;—cry aloud—hang your pulpits with black
Let sorrow bow down every head;
The good friend who bore all your sins on his back,
Your best friend, the Devil, is dead.

Your church is a corpse—you are guarding its tomb;
The soul of your system has fled;
The death knell is tolling your terrible doom;
It tells us, the Devil is dead.

You're bid to the funeral, ministers all,
We've dug the old gentleman's bed;
Your black coats will make a most excellent pall,
To cover your friend who is dead.

Aye, lower him mournfully into the grave;
Let showers of tear-drops be shed;
Your business is gone:—there are no souls to save;
Their tempter, the Devil, is dead.

Woe comes upon woe; it is dreadful to think,
Hell's gone and the demons have fled;
The damn'd souls have broken their chains, every link
The jailor, who bound them, is dead.

Camp-meetings henceforth will be needed no more;
Revivals are knocked on the head;
The orthodox vessel lies stranded on shore;
Their captain, the Devil, is dead.

Reply to Erastus F. Brown.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

[From The Truth Seeker of Dec. 1, 1875.]

[From its language and style we should have no doubt of the following being a *Christian* letter:]

Office of Erastus F. Brown,
Counsellor at Law, 76 Nassau St.

New York, Nov. 8th, 1875.

D. M. Bennett—*Sir:* Your "Open Letter" to *My Master* has been handed to me. When you say that you write the letter because "*I am in quest of truth,*" you tell a deliberate lie. When you say, "*I was in the habit of addressing you regularly four or five times a day, and from one year's end to another,*" I believe you lie. But be it so, why apply to Christ, keeping company, as you unquestionably do, with your father the Devil. Go to him who troubles my Master, with your lying tongue. Let me give you *two words* of advice. Be Decent.

Not your friend, Erastus F. Brown.

Reply.—We are sorry that the zeal of this pious Christian, in the cause of his "Master," should induce him to forget the manners of a gentleman.

We have not been guilty of falsehood in the direction he charges us with it. When he accuses us of "lying," he commits the very offense himself which he charges upon us. We are assuredly in quest of truth, and though we hardly expected to receive a reply to our "Open Letter" from the person addressed, we will be very glad to have the questions answered by any one who calls him "Master." When Mr. Brown insinuates that we lied, in reference to the frequency of the prayers we formerly offered, we can positively assert that he is in error; and we ought to know a good deal more about it than he does. As a statement of truth, and not as boasting, we assure Erastus that for nearly a score of years we prayed regularly every day on rising in the morning, upon retiring at night, and at each meal we ate, besides frequently on extra occasions. Did he never hear of the like before? How often does he address his "Master"? It is possible that we are quite as well acquainted with his "Master" as he is. Has he any right to question us as to why we appeal to his "Master?" Have we not the same right as himself, and all other persons, in this direction? Has he any patent for addressing his "Master" that we have to purchase before we can use it?

The gentleman charges us with keeping company with the Devil. He may be correct in that, so far as we are able to say; but we have no recollection of ever meeting his Satanic Majesty, and we think we could not easily have forgotten it had we ever met him; as we have so often heard him spoken of, that we would esteem him quite a curiosity to see. From all that we can learn of the individual in question, he has been shamefully abused and slandered by such

men as Mr. Brown, and so far as our choice is concerned, we would quite as soon keep his company as that of Erastus himself, believing him to be fully as much a gentleman and quite as much our friend.

As to the Devil being our father, our assailant is obviously in the wrong, for his assertion is in direct opposition to the evidence of our mother, who certainly knows altogether more about the matter than Erastus possibly can. She said our father was an entirely different personage, who neither had a cloven foot, a horned head, nor a long, barbed tail. She is still living, and we can substantiate our position and prove the legal gentleman's error by her affidavit, if he would be in the least gratified thereby. On that aged parent's account, we regret that he should have made such an untruthful, uncalled-for statement, and one that reflects so seriously upon her early character.

Mr. Brown says another thing that we cannot help regretting; and that is, that he is *not* our friend. That is sad; we would that all men (including lawyers) might esteem us a friend. We would rather have the good-will of a dog than his ill-will, especially if he is a cross, biting dog. If, however, Erastus insists upon breaking friendship with us, simply because we saw fit to write a letter to his "Master," we shall be obliged to submit to it with the best possible grace, and feel compensated with the conviction that he loses quite as much by the operation as we do. But if his "Master" manifests no ill-will towards us for writing the letter, is it necessary for Erastus to "get his back up" about it? Does he expect to gain a crown, or a pearl, or a diamond, or a star, by his zealous defence of one who is supposed to be able to take

care of himself? By the way he flutters, one might be led to suppose he was slightly hit.

But is Erastus F. following the injunctions of his "Master," who is reported to have said, "Love those who hate you and despitefully use you"? Does he not rather evince the same intolerant spirit which men of his caste were actuated by two or three centuries ago, when they persecuted, tortured, burned and otherwise put to death, hundreds of thousands of those whom they supposed lacked in due respect to their "Master," thus making cruel barbarians of themselves? Is it not probable that had Mr. Brown lived a few centuries earlier, that in his holy zeal for his "Master," he would have joined hand in hand with Torquemada, Montfort, Alva, Calvin, Munzer, Claverhouse, and more of that class, who reddened their hands and deluged the earth with the blood of their hapless fellow-mortals, because they fancied their "Master" was not properly treated? Does he not evince, in proportion to the age in which he lives, the same intolerance, the same want of charity and the same barbarism that those bloody persecutors, murderers and assassins did? Would not the same spirit which induces a man to-day, to say in anger to a truthful person, "You are a deliberate liar, you have wronged my "Master," have caused him three hundred years ago to say, "I will take your life on my Master's account"?

The way this earth has been saturated with human blood in the name of that "Master," is a terror to every thoughtful, sympathetic mind. The cruelty that has been inflicted upon the human race in the name of that "Master" far transcends all the cruelties, wrongs, and outrages the world has known.

We presume Erastus F. Brown is naturally an amiable, reasonable, kind-hearted person; but the bundle of dogmas, superstitions and errors which he fondly and ignorantly presses to his bosom, and which he fancies is *religion and virtue* makes him what he is. When he attains—as we hope he may—to the advanced light and morality we have gained, he may become as good a man as we are, and be able to depend upon his own good deeds, instead of his "Master's."

In closing, he was kind enough to give us two words of advice; we will give him more. *Erastus:* remember that epithets and hard names are no argument; try and get your eyes open to see the truth and have a little *common sense.*

To the reader we will say, the above letter was drawn out by our "Open Letter to Jesus Christ." It is issued in tract form, and mailed at five cents each, or forty cents a dozen.

[The following appeared in THE TRUTH SEEKER of December 15, 1875.

NEW YORK, Dec. 2d, 1875.

D. M. BENNETT, ESQ.—*Sir:* My letter, printed in the last number of your paper, was neither intended for you, nor for publication. It was sent as a private communication to a gentleman, as a thrust at your "Open Letter," sent to me by him. Through a mistake which I very much regret, it was sent to you, and blazoned in your paper.

"The Christianity of Christ." What is this dreadful thing toward which you are striving to play the part of Hercules towards the Lernæan Hydra? Theodore Parker, in his tract, entitled, "A Lesson for the Day," thus describes it: "The Christianity of Christ is the highest and most perfect ideal ever presented to the longing eyes

of man," and in his review of "Strauss' Life of Jesus," he says: "To write down the true Christian Church seems to me as absurd as to write down the solar system, or put an end to tears, joys and prayers. Still less have we any fear that Christianity itself should come to an end, as some appear to fancy; a form of Religion which has been the parent and guardian of all modern civilization; which has sent its voice to the end of the world, and now addresses equally the heart of the beggar and of the monarch; which is the only bond between societies; an institution cherished and clung to, by the choicest hopes and the deepest desires of the human race, is not in a moment to be displaced."

"Ever since the day that he was in the flesh, the Redeemer's image has been stamped ineffaceably on the hearts of men; even if the letter should perish,—which is holy only because it preserves to us this image,—the image itself would remain forever. It is stamped so deeply in the hearts of men that it can never be effaced, and the words of the Apostle will ever be true, "Lord, whither shall we go? thou only hast the words of eternal life."

But what is offered to us in the place of this, so precious? James Fitzjames Stephen, in his recent work, entitled, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," says: "Each must act as he thinks best, and if he is wrong, so much the worse for him. We stand on a mountain pass in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mists, through which we get glimpses, now and then, of paths, which may be deceptive. If we stand still, we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road, we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one."

Turning from this dark picture, to the "Christianity of Christ," let us say, sweet it is with courage-giving hopes. From your "Open Letter to Jesus Christ," I will now assume that you are bewildered, by the supernatural history of his life; but there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy. The wise Lord Bacon said: "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's

minds about to religion." I therefore urge you to drink deep, or taste not; shallow draughts intoxicate, drink largely; and that will sober you. Then will the truth break upon your mind, "that Nature and the Supernatural together constitute the one system of God."

Yours, ERASTUS F. BROWN.

REPLY.—While we perceive a decided improvement in the tone and style of the above, when compared with Mr. Brown's previous letter, published in our last, we connot but notice the peculiarity of his defense. He says now, that letter was not intended for publication, nor for us to see. Can it be possible he would direct a letter to us; call us a deliberate liar; say we were a child of the Devil; ask why we presumed to trouble his master, and wind up with the sage advice to us, *to be decent*, and not mean it for our eye, but to be read by a near friend of ours? Does that put any better face on the matter? If it is *Christian* to write a scurrilous, untruthful letter, to be read only by cherished friends, with the design that it should not be read by the party nominally addressed, we cannot think it is *honorable* or gentlemanly. Is that such a "thrust" as a just man would be likely to make? Under other circumstances we do not believe Mr. Brown could think so himself, as he is undoubtedly a gentleman. We must, then, attribute his course in this matter, to his creed, or religion, and not to his own inherent sense of right. It is another item in the long score against Christianity.

We have never had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Brown, but from the admiration he has for the character of Jesus, we judge the organ of veneration is well developed in his cranium; we venture the opinion that the center part of his head is somewhat elevated. Jesus is his model of excellence and true

worth, and his veneration impels him to worship and adore that ideal. Our head is rather level on the top, and it is not easy for us to venerate and worship *any* mythical, doubtful character.

Nothing in the world is more fully proved, than that human beings can easily be made to believe in imaginary personages, and that, by constantly hearing the good qualities of any individual who has lived continually lauded and be-praised, that an undue degree of admiration and reverence is excited.

What can be more real to an imaginative child, than the absolute existence of St. Nicholas or "Santa Claus" —the patron saint for juveniles during the Christmas holidays? A little girl, who, on Christmas morning, finds a beautiful, doll or a set of toy-dishes in her stocking, believes, just as firmly, in the existence and goodness and benignity of Santa Claus, and would be as indignant to hear his personality or good character questioned, as Mr. Brown does in reference to his demi-god, Jesus. Has not the little girl ocular demonstration that Santa Claus exists, and thinks of her and loves her? Has Mr. Brown anything more? Has he as much?

Unfortunately for Jesus and his worshipers, there is a great want of authenticity, in the first place, as to his existence. We have simply the statements of what purports to be biographies of him, written by four individuals of whom we know nothing and can know nothing, and which is entirely unconfirmed by any cotemporaneous history. It does appear that these stories were not known to be in existence for over one hundred years after Jesus is said to have lived, and even according to the claims of Christian

writers, the gospels were not written till thirty, and some of them sixty years after Jesus died.

When the great difficulty which always exists in obtaining the real facts in all occurrences and items of history is remembered; when it is borne in mind that right here among ourselves, where the facilities for writing, printing and rapidly disseminating intelligence are a thousand times greater than eighteen hundred years ago; when we know it is a fact that not a strictly truthful report was ever written of a single battle that occurred in our recent war; when it is a truth that, in the compiling of the great "American Cyclopædia," now being revised and re-published by the Appletons, upon which there are engaged such an able corps of editors and revisers, who assiduously and constantly labor to keep out all errors; when, despite all the caution and watchfulness, the most glaring mistakes have crept in, for instance, with regard to our Croton water works, the capacity of the various reservoirs, and the amount of water discharged from each, as well as other statistics in reference to Croton, which would seem could be easily and correctly obtained; when, we say, these facts are borne in mind, as well as the truth that the early fathers and founders of Christianity were notorious for their inventions and pious frauds, can we, with any degree of certainty, take the statements of unknown persons, who are supposed to have lived nearly two thousand years ago, especially when they relate many things that are impossible and could never have occurred?

If Jesus was begotten by a ghost—if he had no father, except an invisible, impalpable, imponderous phantom, what earthly chance had Matthew or Luke

to know anything about it? They make no claim of writing by inspiration, and if they did, could we believe them implicitly? If any one or two writers, or reporters, or priests, should now write a statement that a young, obscure girl had become a mother without one of the opposite sex having intercourse with her, would the world believe such a story? Ought it to believe it? Were story-tellers in olden time any more reliable than now? Were not fable, fiction and error more blended with what they meant for *history* than in the present age of the world? When in recitals of the present time we find we are compelled to take them with many grains of allowance, is it not quite as necessary to use caution in this direction with the uncertain stories of olden time? Is there any virtue in belief without proof? Is not the little girl who believes in Santa Claus upon the strength of what she is told, equally as meritorious as Mr. Brown who believes in the remarkable conception, the remarkable life, the remarkable death, and the remarkable resurrection and ascension of Jesus, simply because four unknown and unreliable persons agreed indifferently in saying so?

Matthew states that at the crucifixion the sun ceased to give light for several hours, that terrible earthquakes occurred which opened the graves, and that those who were dead and buried came forth out of their graves and moved again with their former companions; is it not a little singular that neither Mark, Luke, nor John, nor Peter, Paul, nor Jude, nor Celsus, Josephus, nor Pliny knew anying and said nothing about it? If such an occurrence should take place now, can it be supposed one single individual would be all who would take any notice of it? Is any sen-

sible person under any obligation to believe a writer when he states such great improbabilities, especially when he can be convicted of a score of mis-statements in other lesser matters ? Is there any virtue in believing a falsehood at any time ?

We do not say that Jesus never lived, but we do say there is no proof that he did. When we consider that what are called the "four gospels" might very easily have been written by Eusebius or some of the other early fathers, priests or monks who were anxious to transplant the older pagan mythologies of the East into Judea and to re-localize the antique notions of India, Persia and Egypt, and when it is known to be a fact that almost every incident narrated in the life of Jesus had its prototype more than five hundred years earlier, in Christna, Buddha, Prometheus and many others, it is more easy for a plain, matter-of-fact man, who is not biased by early education, to think the whole story a borrowed one, rather than that the same events of half a millennium before should take place over again. Can we justly ascribe to Jesus, priority and originality for sentiments and doctrines which were positively known to have been taught hundreds of years earlier by the Essenes of Alexandria, and other localities?

But admitting that Jesus did live, and there were doubtless many by the name, the same as there are at this day in Spain and Mexico, and as for two thousand years there have been Jameses and Joshuas, he was only a man who was begotten and born like other human beings, who lived and died like them, and after he was dead did not arise again and go sailing up bodily in the air where it is cold enough to freeze a man through and through in five minutes. His praises, his wonders

and his super-humanity have been so long sung and reiterated that thousands of people like Mr. Brown have absolutely got to believe that such a remarkable person once lived on the earth, and that he was God and made the Universe.

There is no lack of instances where human beings of only ordinary traits of character, have had great honors thrust upon them, and especially after death have been deified and have been elevated to a niche of great eminence in the temple of adulation. In olden times it was very common, and even in the last century there has been plenty of it. How Napoleon Bonaparte has been revered and magnified in all his excellent qualities far beyond the reality, constituting him a hero, a wonder and almost a demi-god, while his enemies saw little in him to admire. How our own Washington, by being extolled, be-praised, and always spoken of as a perfect, faultless individual, is now revered by millions far beyond his real merits. One of the tendencies of the human mind, especially the ignorant and superstitious portion, is to "hero-worship." This, however, will gradually pass away, as intelligence and correct thinking gain sway in the world.

If Jesus did live, and if he said every word that is attributed to him, why should he be credited with great power and wisdom, and with divinity itself, when he uttered no better, no wiser, no more God-like sayings, than Zoroaster, Buddha, Christna, Confucius, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and many others who lived hundreds of years before him? Is there a virtue in selecting one individual who has lived in the past, and in according to him all the wisdom, all the excellence and all the adorable characteristics that

belong equally as much, to say the least, to numerous other individuals? Is it justice or equity to rob one individual or many individuals, of the honor and credit to which they are fairly entitled, and to bestow it upon another no more worthy than themselves?

Our friend quotes Theodore Parker. It is rather a new thing for Christians to quote him to sustain their institution. They neither recognized him as a Christian while he lived, nor had scarcely a kind word to say of him when he died. To them he was an Infidel almost equal to Paine or Voltaire. Had we room, we think we could quote many of Mr. Parker's sayings which Mr. Brown would hardly endorse. Theodore Parker was a great man, and was much farther advanced in mental freedom and boldness than the great majority of those around him; but he, too, like Mr. Brown, had an excessive amount of veneration, and he fancied he saw in the character of Jesus a great deal to love and admire.

If Parker did say, on a certain occasion, when he had a special point to make, that "the Christianity of Christ is the highest and most perfect ideal ever presented to the longing eyes of man," it was an extravagant expression, unfounded in truth. We would like to have Mr. Brown, or any other individual, show wherein the morals or inculcations of Jesus were any higher or purer than those taught and believed by the persons just named, none of whom claimed to be God. It is just as easy for the admirers and worshipers of Jesus to accord undue reverence to him, as it is for the worshipers of Buddha, Christna or Mahomet to do the same by them. Probably no Christian devotee can exceed the high degree of adoration which the several followers of these great leaders feel

towards their beau-ideals. We who are without the circle can see that all are equally mistaken, and that virtue attaches to one no more than another for believing what is untrue.

If Christianity possesses all the excellence and virtue the world has ever known, is it not singular that it has produced more intolerance, more persecution, more bloodshed and more death, than any and all other religions the world has ever known? That this has been the case, and that the history of Christianity has been written in blood, can be easily shown.

Lord Bacon was truly a wise and a great man, and we will be glad if Christians ever become willing to accept all the positions he arrived at.; but when he said, "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion," it only proves that even great minds can err. How is it to-day? The greatest minds of the age, the ripest scholars, the soundest thinkers, and the most learned scientists, are those who have the least faith in theology, revealed religion and a personal God. In this category are enrolled Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Faraday, Proctor, Helmholtz, Buchner, Schmidt, Draper, Fiske, and numerous others of less distinction; while in the opposite column are found Moody and Sankey, Mrs. Grundy, Mrs. Partington, Erastus F. Brown, and unfortunately, too many more.

If it is a virtue for Mr. Brown to believe in his myth, it is equally a virtue for the little girl who hangs up her stocking, to believe in her myth, Santa Claus. And it is not strange, that, when she was told by her mother, that she was now getting large

enough to lay aside her dolls and playthings, and be a woman; that there was no such person as Santa Claus, that, when her cherished ideals were thus so cruelly destroyed, she should reply in this wise: "Now Ma! If you have been telling me a story all this time, about Santa Claus, how do I know but you have been telling me a story about Jesus, too? If there is no Santa Claus, I don't believe there is any Jesus Christ either; there is as much proof of one as the other." And the little child was about right. If, in the opinion of her mother, it was time for her to lay aside childishness and error, and not believe longer in myths and fallacies, is it not also time for Mr. Brown and thousands of others to do the same, and embrace the universal truths which exist in nature and reason, and which depend neither upon Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Christna, Plato, Aristotle, Christ, Mahomet, Luther, nor Joseph Smith, but which exist inherently and eternally in the boundless Universe. May he, and numerous others, early come to see the truth as it is clearly brought to light by science and reason, which cause myths, superstition, and fables to step to the rear and to return to the shades of oblivion.

Read THE TRUTH SEEKER; a live Journal devoted to Science, Morals, and Freethought. Price per year $2.00 for six months $1.00, for three months 50cts.

Circulate the TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS containing from four to seventy-five pages each. Price from one to ten cents each. A liberal discount in quantity.

Sow broadcast the TRUTH SEEKER LEAFLETS four cents per dozen, 25cts., per 100, $2.00, per 1.000, all sent post-paid. Address

D. M. BENNETT, 335 Broadway, N. Y.

The Fear of Death.

BY D. M. BENNETT.

Among the unfortunate legacies which the Christian religion has bequeathed to mankind is the fear of death and a perpetual dread that the condition of existence after this life is one of unhappiness and ceaseless torment. Among all the religions of the world, in all lands, and in all systems of faith, none have inculcated with such fears and apprehensions of death and what is to succeed it, as Christianity has done and is still doing. The priests—the founders and promulgators of Christianity—have so persistently held up to the credulous gaze of the masses, a picture of a cruel and revengeful God, who, not content with the afflictions, adversities and trials which make up much of the experience of his creatures in this life. has devised that their existence shall not terminate with death, but that they shall live eternally, and the far greater portion be doomed to endless torture and the most terrible sufferings of which the mind is capa-

ble of conceiving. They have painted the lurid flames of hell, the horrid demons which preside there, and the utter wretchedness of the damned in such vivid colors, that the ignorant multitudes have accepted it all as truth, and it is not strange that, for many hundreds of years, God has been looked upon as a most cruel and merciless tyrant who created a devil or devils to lead his children astray, and then to torture them through the endless ages of eternity for the same. It is not strange that, believing this, death has been so dreaded, and feared, as the greatest enemy of the race.

The vindictive character which has been attributed to Deity, the malicious disposition assigned to his important agent, the Devil, the forebodings of a terrible day of judgment, when all who ever lived upon the earth are to be gathered together and judged, the principal portion to be hopelessly doomed to the agonies of a fearful, never-ending hell, have been accepted by millions of human beings as truths, and have caused more unhappiness to the race than all other creeds in the world. Death has been made replete with terror and the future existence with unutterable fear and apprehension. Nothing has so embittered life; nothing has so detracted from the comparative happiness human beings might have enjoyed as these abhorrent doctrines have done. It is impossible to compute the fear, the terror and the dread that the credulous and confiding have been made to suffer from this source. Doubts and most harrowing fears have tortured the minds of unnumbered millions of our race. Their own future condition has not only been a matter of the most painful anxiety to them, but the welfare of loved friends and

companions, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children has been of the most intense interest, with the most distressing misgivings. Yes, these dreadful fears and forebodings have embittered the happiness and destroyed the comfort of immense numbers of human beings! Could the mental agony be computed which the belief in a vindictive God, a cruel Devil and a burning hell had produced where the Christian religion has prevailed, it would be enough to appall the stoutest hearts and awaken the strongest condemnation against such a monstrous creed.

Not only have these doctrines operated to destroy the peace of mind of individuals, but the belief in a vindictive, revengeful God—who has been the source of the most relentless and cruel persecutions, which man has been made to suffer—the belief in a merciless God has made cruel and blood-thirsty worshipers. It has overthrown mental liberty, individual right and personal safety. It has caused human blood to flow in rivers, and been the pretext for the taking of human life in numbers variously estimated at from seventy-five millions to one hundred and fifty millions of the race. The record is the most fearful of any portions of man's history. Most truly did Robert G. Ingersoll, in one of his bursts of eloquence, exclaim: "There can be little liberty on earth while men worship a tyrant in heaven," and with equal truth may it be said, *there can be little happiness for the human race who believe in a creative God, who consigns his creatures to the torments of a never ending hell.*

How many thousands, and millions, have passed through life in a perfect dread of the terrible doom they feared awaited them at death! How they have

shuddered and trembled at the very thought of passing from this world! In their waking and sleeping hours it has been a constant nightmare to them. How many parents have feared lest when the vale is passed that their beloved children will be forever separated from themselves—one or two, possibly, being admitted within the gates of the beautiful city, while the larger portion are cast down into the horrid, sulphurous gulf. How many husbands and wives, relations and friends, acquaintances and strangers have been thus racked by fears, tortured by forebodings, and haunted with misgivings in contemplating the probable fearful destiny which awaited them! How many simple, honest-hearted people have passed wretched lives by this constant fear of death and eternity! Whether they have secured a passport that will take them safely into the regions of happiness, or whether their doom is down in the prisons of the damned, is the one ever-recurring question which they are unable to solve and which is such a constant source of apprehension and mental agony.

If the reader will pardon us for a few moments we will make a few extracts from the sermons of Christian Clergymen and Christian writers, touching the subject of hell, that it may be better understood whence come the terrors and harrowing fears to which we have alluded.

In Baxter's "Saint's Rest," he thus rapturously addresses himself to sinners:

"Your torment shall be universal. . . . The soul and the body shall each have its torments. The guilt of their sins will be to damned souls like tinder to gunpowder, to make the flames of hell take hold of them with fury. . . . The eyes shall be tortured with sights of

horror, and hosts of devils and damned souls. The ears shall be tortured with the howlings and curses of their companions in torments. Their smell shall be tortured with the fumes of brimstone, and the liquid mass of eternal fire shall prey upon every part. . . . No drop of water shall be allowed to cool their tongues; no moment of respite permitted to relieve their agonies."

The saintly Bunyan gives this delectable picture:

"All the devils in hell will be with thee howling and roaring, screeching and yelling in such a hideous manner, that thou wilt be at thy wit's end, and be ready to run stark mad again from anguish and torment. . . . Here thou must lie and fry, and scorch, and broil, and burn for evermore."

The cherished divine, Jonathan Edwards, among a vast amount he uttered upon this favorite topic of hell, said:

"The saints in glory will be far more sensible how dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are, yet this will be no occasion of grief to them, but rejoicing. They will not be sorry for the damned; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them, but on the contrary, when they see this sight, it will occasion rejoicing, and excite them to joyful praises."

The Rev. Mr. Benson, a prominent Methodist commentator of England, uses this language:

"Infinite justice arrests their guilty souls and confines them in the dark prisons of hell, till they have satisfied all the demands by their personal sufferings, which, alas! they never can do. . . . God is present in hell in his infinite justice and almighty wrath as an unquenchable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink in everlasting torture. His fiery indignation kindles and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being and renders all their powers most acutely sensible, thus

setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it *cut most intolerably deep.* He will exert *all* his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their natures will admit. . . . Number the stars in the firmament, the drops of rain, the sands on the sea shore, and when thou hast finished the calculation, sit down and number all the ages of woe. Let every star, every drop every grain of sand, represent *one million of tormentiny ages;* and know that as many more millions still remain behind, and yet as many more behind them, and so on without end."

The Rev. Mr. Ambrose, in a sermon on Dooms-day, drew this picture:

"When the damned have drunken down whole draughts of brimstone one day, they must do the same another day. The eye shall be tormented with the sight of devils; the ears with the hideous yellings and outcries of the *damned in flames*; the nostrils shall be smothered, as it were, with brimstone; the tongue, the hand, the foot and every part shall *fry in flames.*"

The Rev. Mr. Emmons, a sound orthodox, in his "Volume of Sermons," has this choice bit:

"The happiness of the elect in heaven will in part consist in watching the torments of the damned in hell. And among these it may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends on earth. One part of the business of the blest is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of those miserable objects will sing, 'Amen, hallelujah; praise the Lord.'"

An Evangelical poet, catching the fiery refrain, thus sweetly sings:

Clattering of iron, and the clank of chains:
The clang of lashing whips, shrill shrieks and groans,
Loud, ceaseless howlings, cries and piercing moans,

Meanwhile, as if but light were all their pain,
Legions of devils bound themselves in chains.
Tormented and tormentors, o'er them shake.
Thongs and forked iron in the burning lake,
Belching eternal flames, and wreathed with spires
Of curling serpents rouse the brimstone fires.
With whips of fiery scorpions, scourge their slaves.
And in their faces dash the livid waves."

The Rev. Mr. Emmons again says:

"When they (the saints) see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them more a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them in making them so to differ. The sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever."

"Where saints and angels from their blest abode,
Chanting loud hallelujahs to their God,
Look down on sinners in the realm of woe,
And draw fresh pleasures from the scenes below."

The Rev. Thomas Bolton thus descants upon the bliss of the future life:

"The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her *ungodly husband.* The godly husband shall say, *Amen*! to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom. The godly parent shall say hallelujah! at the passing of the sentence upon the ungodly child. And the godly child, shall, from his heart, approve the damnation of his wicked parents, who begot him, and the mother who bore him."

The Rev. Thomas Vincent, orthodox, thus touched the beautiful picture:

"This will fill them (the saints) with *astonishing admiration* and wondering joy, when they see some of their near relatives going to hell; their fathers, their mothers, their children, their husbands, their wives, their human friends and companions, while they themselves are

saved. . . . Those affections they now have for relatives *out* of Christ, will *cease*, and they will not have the least trouble to see them sentenced to hell *and thrust into the fiery furnace.*"

In one of the former publications of the American Tract Society, is the following, from Rev. James Smith:

"The fire of hell is such, that multitudes of tears will not quench it, and length of time will not burn it out. The wrath of God abideth on the rejector of Christ. (John, iii. 36.) O eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we have to measure the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the flame of the pit. (Isaiah, xxx. 33.) And where shall we find waters to quench those flames? Oh eternity! If all the body of the earth and the sea were turned to sand, and all the space up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and if a little bird should come once every thousand years and take away in her bill but a single grain from off that heap of sand, what numberless years and ages must be spent before the whole of that vast quantity would be carried away; yet, even if at the end of that time the sinner might come out of hell, there might be some hope; but that word *Forever*, breaks the heart. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.'"

Pollock's artistic touches to this lovely picture, are familiar to many:

"God in the grasp
Of his almighty strength, took them upraised,
And threw them down into the yawning pit
Of bottomless perdition, ruined, damned,
Fast bound in chains of darkness evermore,
The second death and the undying worm,
Opening their horrid jaws with hideous yell,
Falling, received their everlasting prey.
A groan returned, as down they sunk, and sunk,
And ever sunk among the utter dark;

A groan returned—the righteous heard the groan,
The groan of all the reprobate, when first
They felt damnation sure, and heard hell close!"

This delicate delineation of the loveliness of hell, is from the pen of the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.R.R., and was published by authority in England, and was part of the instruction designed for the young:

"We know how far it is to the middle of the earth; it is just four thousand miles; so if hell is in the middle of the earth, it is four thousand miles to the horrible, prison of hell. Down in this place is a terrific noise. Listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions and millions of tormented creatures, mad with the fury of hell! Oh! the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair, from millions on millions! There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth, and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God's anger, which shakes hell to its foundations. But there is another sound. There is in hell a sound like that of many waters. It is as if all the rivers and oceans of the world were pouring themselves with a great splash down on the floor of hell. Is it, then, really the sound of waters? It is. Are the rivers and oceans of the earth pouring themselves into hell? No. What is it, then? It is the sound of oceans of tears running down from countless millions of eyes. They cry forever and ever. They cry because the sulphurous smoke torments their eyes. They cry because they are in darkness. They cry because they have lost the beautiful heaven. They cry because the sharp fire burns them. . . . The roof is red hot; the walls are red hot; the floor is like a thick sheet of red hot iron. See, on the middle of that red hot iron floor stands a girl. She looks about sixteen years of age. She has neither shoes nor stockings on her feet. The door of this room has never been opened since she first set her feet on this red hot floor. Now she sees the door opening. She rushes forward. She has

gone down upon her knees upon the red hot floor. Listen, she speaks. She says: 'I have been standing with my bare feet on this red-hot floor for years. Day and night my only standing place has been this red-hot floor. Sleep never came on me for a moment, that I might forget this horrible burning floor. Look at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment—only for a short moment. Oh; that in this endless eternity of years, I might forget the pain only for one single moment.' The Devil answers her question. 'Do you ask for a moment—for one moment to forget your pain? No, not for one single moment during the never-ending eternity of years, shall you ever leave this red-hot floor.'

The reader will doubtless excuse us from making any further quotations of this description. These are but a fair sample of the abominable inculcations which beings in human shape, and called "divines," "men of God," "Holy men," etc., for centuries regaled their credulous hearers and required them to believe. Is it strange that those who can believe such horrible drivel as this should entertain a dread of the future life and that their happiness in this life was embittered in contemplating existence in the next?

Fortunately this abhorrent belief in an eternity of agony for the far greater portion of the human race is not entertained over the entire world. Christianity is the only religion of the hundreds that make up the total of human creeds that teaches a hell of endless torture. The Mohammedans have a modified hell, but it is not endless. Brahmanism recognizes degrees of future unhappiness, but the extremest of their views in this direction bears no comparison with the terrors of the Christian hell. The same may be said of the theology of the Egyptians, Grecians, and

Romans. They had far less of revengeful gods and torturing hells and devils. Judaism was confined to this life and did not teach a future state of punishment. It was reserved for Christianity to inculcate this most abhorrent belief, and it has been the powerful engine of priests, inquisitors and persecutors for fifteen hundred years; enough, surely, to cause it to be heartily execrated by every humane and sympathetic man. What avails it if five or ten per cent of the human family are in Abraham's bosom or are otherwise wafted to the plains of Paradise, there to bow eternally before the throne on which sits the king of vengeance and punishment, if all the balance are to be cast into a seething, sulphurous, fiery pit from which, according to the divines above quoted, there is no possible escape, and where the terrible torture cannot be ended by death.

From all these horrors, the scientist, the Rationalist, the Liberalist and the Spiritualist, are freed. They look upon death as a simple and necessary condition of Nature, which can be contemplated without fear or terror. They see that death is as essential as life; that composition and decomposition, organization and disorganization are the eternal law which rules throughout all Nature. One is as necessary as the other; that there cannot be life without death; and that one organization is made up of the atomic constituents of others which preceded it. The material of which we are composed has entered into human and animal bodies thousands upon thousands of times. Life is the result of organization. The trituration of the primitive rocks composed the soil from which, with water and the sun's warmth, vegetable life in the form of plants, grains and fruits are produced.

In these are garnered the sun's rays in the form of latent heat and the elements which, by being eaten, digested and assimilated, produce animal and human life. When the atoms or molecules composing living bodies have performed their service, and when the organizations die and decompose, they return again to their original conditions or unite in forming new compounds, and thus the eternal rotation is kept up; not a particle of matter passing out of existence, nor being lessened or increased.

Truly has the earth we tread been called a vast cemetery; the rocks and stones may be regarded as monuments and tomb-stones, upon which are engraved the history of millions and trillions who have preceded us in existence since the earth was peopled.

A careful calculation has been made and an estimate arrived at, that upon this globe since man was evolved from lower orders of life, have been 36,657,843,273,075.000 persons. This vast number is more than the mind can comprehend; but when divided by 3,095,000—the number of square leagues on the globe—leave 11,320,688,732 square miles of land, which being divided as before, give 1,314,623,076 persons to each square mile. If we reduce these miles to square rods the number will be, 1,853,174,600.000, which divided in like manner, will give, 1,283 inhabitants to each square rod, and these being reduced to feet will give about five persons to each square foot of earth. This, undoubtedly, is only an approximate estimate; and as some portions of the earth have been more densely populated than others, the number of persons to the square rod or square foot must have been much greater in some parts of the globe than this estimate. If it is true that 1,283

persons is the number of human beings who have lived and died on each square rod—averaged—it is not at all improbable that on many parts of the earth 5,000 persons have lived and died upon a single square rod. Probably there is but little matter on the surface of the earth but what has at some time helped to constitute human organizations, and portions of the gasses and fluids have thousands upon thousands of times assisted in making sentient human beings. Life and death have thus through the ages closely followed each other—each important in the great economy of Nature.

Death, as we have seen, is essential to life. Massacre, even, is incessant; flowers, animals, and men, are dying every moment; the earth is a vast slaughter-house and the ocean is reddened with blood. One form of life is constantly being built up from other forms; small fishes are converted into larger ones; plants are being transformed into animals and animals into men. When the more death takes place, the more life, in some form, is the result. In the great law of compensation which abounds in the entire economy of Nature there is absolutely no waste or loss of life-force. Death is essential to life, and equally forms a part of the laws of the Universe.

Death, then, should not be regarded as an enemy, but as a friend. As after the toils of a wearisome day nothing is so sweet as a refreshing sleep, when consciousness for the time being takes its departure, so after the toils, troubles, and afflictions of life are ended, how welcome the long, silent sleep that supervenes! How truthful and appropriate the couplet of Dr. Johnson:

"'Tis a glorious boon to die;
This favor can't be prized too high."

The epitaph placed by A. J. Davis upon the tombstone of his father beautifully expresses his view of the silent messenger. "Death is but a kind and welcome servant who unlocks with noiseless hand, life's flower-encircled door to show us those we love."

Life, of course, is sweet to the whole human race, save to those bowed down in suffering and sorrow of a mental or physical nature, but when its busy scenes are enacted, when efforts and struggles are over, when ambition is satisfied, when health and strength have departed, when the hopes and fears have been realized or blasted, how sweet the long, quiet sleep which knows no waking! If eight hours' repose and forgetfulness are welcome to the tired frame, why should a long continued sleep be looked upon with terror and misgiving? Death, in itself, is not painful; disease or injury may induce conditions that cause acute suffering, but these are more unnatural than otherwise. As a rule, death is much like the burning out of a taper or the ebbing of a gentle stream, without pain, without suffering. The struggles accompanying death which often appear as most painful, are only apparent. The senses have become so benumbed or paralyzed that acute feeling is absent. "The senses fail as life recedes."

It is true, too, that we are dying every day, all through our lives. During every second of our existence we are throwing off effete particles of matter which are dead, and are replacing them with new molecules of life and vigor; thus life and death go hand in hand forever.

It is superstition and the false teaching of theolo-

gians, as we observed, that have clothed death with all the terror and dread with which is usually contemplated. It is they who have filled the minds of the ignorant and credulous with the horrible pictures of gods and devils, gorgons and goblins. Without any warrant in Nature or reason has death been converted into the "king of terrors," and made to be regarded as the greatest enemy of man. How can this class ever fully atone for the wrongs they have done the race ?

Those who deprive their fellow beings of happiness are their greatest enemies. Men must learn to discard these false teachers, and look to the truths of Nature and the inculcations of reason, and then the fear of death will have mainly passed away.

How absurd in these theologians to paint horrid pictures of a future life, making the imaginary gods and devils of equal cruelty and malice, protracting the torments instituted by them to a never-ending eternity, and making the same consequent upon our belief or unbelief in dogmas and claims that are abhorrent to our every sense and aspiration ; as if our belief was entirely under our control, and that we are capable of believing anything we choose to, and that our views are not controlled by the laws of evidence and conviction. A man cannot believe that a crow is white, though he is told to do so ; he cannot believe a stone is bread; that the sun is no more brilliant than a mountain of rocks ; or that one is three, and that three are one. How cruel, then, to consign him to an eternity of torture, because he cannot do what he cannot. To do this is as unreasonable as are the demands of priestcraft, theology and superstition.

Though in this state of existence we find that the

forces of Nature—which may be denominated the supreme power, or God—are not malicious, revengeful or cruel, they do not torture the helpless and the erring without cause or object. The theologians would have us believe that this supreme power will follow us after death and consign us to indescribable torments which have no end.

How greatly this class of men wrong and belie the ruling powers, or the Deity they claim to describe. If he is not merciless, vindictive and revengeful here, what warrant is there for saying he will be so there? If the forces of the Universe are adapted to the happiness of man in this stage of existence is there any good reason to suppose there will be a change of policy or results in the next, if there is one? Is not the Universe governed by eternal, unchangeable principles or laws? Is it not the same with Deity, whatever he may be? Are there any just grounds for theologians to assume that Deity indulges in petty hatred and revenge, and that he will spend any portion of his time in arraigning fallible mortals for their shortcomings, and in punishing them perpetually, merely because he has the power to do so, and without any hope of reformation or improvement?

This doctrine is the most monstrous defamation and slander upon the character of Deity that has ever been devised, and the injury it has done in the world in destroying the happiness of man and giving license or pretext for the infernal persecutions and bloodshed that for a thousands years, and more, were practiced in the world, are, as before remarked, impossible to be computed.

Very few of these advocates for the tortures of hell will admit for a moment that there is the slightest

possibity for the damned souls who are doomed to its tortures ever by any means to make their escape, either by good conduct, repentance, prayer or reformation. Nothing can make a particle of difference. This ruling power, which they inconsistently call a God of love and mercy, is inexorable. He will not yield one iota in the severity of his punishment nor lessen one moment its continuance. It must last for limitless ages—yes, decillions of centuries—one everlasting continuation of the most severe agony for countless quintillions of wretched human beings who were brought into existence without any agency or choice of their own, and for simply acting out the natures with which they were endowed, but more especially, as we said, for not believing the code of theological ethics, or rather the "infernal tomfooleries" which a privileged aristocracy who live and fatten by declaring these monstrosities—and all without object or hope of doing the slightest good by this eternal cruelty and punishment!!

What a horrible picture this, for a loving God! What a monstrous libel upon the character of any being! All the demons and devils which the brains of superstitious men have invented, could not begin to equal the monstrosity of such a God! It is all false —false as hell itself. There is no such being; no such aimless, hopeless punishment; there is no being who delights in burning and tormenting poor erring souls. It is the basest falsehood that the imagination of man has ever devised, and the world should hasten to rid itself of such a shocking belief. It would be far better to have no God than such a one.

If a hell could be possible for a moment it would seem but just that the class of men who have invent-

ed and promulgated these falsehoods and damned the world with them for so many centuries, should for a limited period, be made to endure its severity in a mild form ; but it would be too terrible even for that class of great offenders. Where is there a being so unfeeling and vindictive as to remand one poor mortal to the torments of hell, whatever may have been his offense?

We should not, perhaps, blame this class of theologians too severely for the monstrous theories they have so long proclaimed to their fellow beings ; for it has all been the result of ignorance and superstition; or in other words, a reflex of the darkness in which the world has so long been groping. We see too, that the doctrine of devils and hell has been remunerating to the priests. It has enabled them to secure and maintain a control over their fellows which nothing else could have given. The pictures they have drawn of a vindictive God, who consigns his creatures to eternal flames ; the infernal devils who execute his sentences, and the fiery pit where the whole is executed, has been a great source of gain to the clergy, and has given them a power over the minds of their fellow-beings that nothing else could have accomplished. They have caused men and women to believe that they could influence and direct God ; that he conferred with them and made known to them that which he wished the masses to believe and to do. These self-constituted agents and managers for God, have thus done a very successful business in this world of ours. They have caused the cringing millions to look up to them, as having control of their destiny and as wielding such influence at the high court in the sky, that but a word or a nod from them was

sufficient to send hapless mortals to heaven or hell. The exactions they have laid upon the toiling millions as a recompense for thus transacting God's business, has been most onerous to bear, and the tithes and rates and salaries the poor laboring classes have been forced to pay to this sleek, fat-bellied, sanctimonious, hypocritical, exacting class, have been a heavy burden for many, many weary centuries.

Darkness and ignorance has for a long time ruled the moral world, and a cloud of gloom and horror has hung over the minds of men, the dimensions of which it is impossible to calculate. But thanks to the progress of education, civilization and science, new light is breaking in. We are getting so we can discern truth from error. The vindictive gods, the cruel devils, the gorgons and goblins, are fast hastening back to the shades of oblivion, and soon the world will be cursed with their presence no more.

Men and brethren, let us raise a glad shout of rejoicing that the reign of darkness is so nearly over. That reason and truth are steadily gaining the ascendancy over priestcraft, tyranny and lies. That a belief in hell and devils is fast passing from the minds of men, and that the genial, cheering rays dispensed by the sun of science and truth are spreading over the whole world.

The reign of terror has been long and dark, but there is much time yet before us ; the opportunities for acquiring knowledge and real truth are better than ever before. We have only to improve the means within our reach, and discard the errors and absurdities that in the past ruled the world as with a rod of iron, and we have everything to hope for. We are making cheering progress. We are nearing the bright

goal of truth with rapid strides. In another century the world will have no use for revengeful gods, torturing devils, flaming hells, seas of burning brimstone and the hordes of officious, designing priests which have so long ruled the minds of men. These will all pass away, and the reign of truth, reason, and love of humanity, will be inaugurated and will gladden the world. Instead of such a multitude of churches where dogmas and creeds are enjoined, we shall have halls and schools of science and philosophy. Instead of the 65,000 priests that are now scattered over our country, who live sumptuously and are clad in rich apparel, for promulgating absurdities, superstitions and lies, they will gradually give place to teachers of truth who will learn us the nature and beauty of the Universe, and will enlighten us in the fact that in all laudable efforts to promote the happiness of our fellow-beings, we increase and amplify our own. This number of professed representatives from the throne of heaven will then cease trying to make us believe that they have the private ear of the Ruler of the Universe, and that through them we have to learn his secret will and pleasure. They will no longer use efforts to make us believe that God gets angry with human beings for what they think, for what they say and what they do; and that he stoops to inflict pain and torture for the offenses they are weak enough to commit. All men will then be able to comprehend, it is to be hoped, that whatever God is, that he cannot be a local, cicumscribed personage; that he is as extensive as the Universe, and that it contains him, for it contains all that exists.

Henry Ward Beecher in a recent sermon made some very sensible remarks upon the subject of deity.

Among other observations, he said: "It is the question back of all other questions—is there a God? And if there is, do we know anything about him? . . There are many realms which have not been entered into which are necessary to a true understanding of the divine nature that science is showing us fast. Step by step, by astronomy, by geology, and still more lately by other nascent sciences, we have transformed in us the notions of the methods of creation, so that the intelligent, well-read man does not stand where all Christians stood a century ago. . . . No man stands where he can fully understand the character and feelings of a superior order of beings, and certainly not such a one as God. . . . . Looking at the world at large, the Atheism and Infidelity of to-day is the medicine of the world. It is not good to take, but it is necessary to be taken, for the impositions of men and the ingenuities of men to describe, and the accumulation of rites and ceremonies, and the misplacing of authority, and all the organism of Christianity and the churches, and the ministers, the doctrines and the wheels of the world are absolutely clogged up with things which men want to let go, and we shall not cleanse them but by some such great sweeping inundations. . . . If there is no God, it will be no harm to know it, and if there is a God, they are not going to extinguish him by turning any of their alembics or anything else over him. What we think of the sun, the sun don't care about. God is, or he is not, and either way it is better we should know it; therefore whatever may come from the researches of thoughtful men, let it come. It may do some harm, but it will cleanse the world of ten thousand evils."

These are truly advanced views to be entertained and uttered by an orthodox clergyman, and much is to be hoped for the future condition of public sentiment, if such declarations can come from our pulpits. "What we think of the sun, the sun don't care about," is an impressive lesson. Of all the deities or symbols for gods that men have invented or adopted for worship, the sun is undoubtedly the most appropriate. The sun-worshipers have been quite as sensible as any who have existed. The sun rises every morning with beaming rays which are benignantly shed upon all parts of the world. Light and heat are produced by the effect of its beams upon our atmosphere. The earth is warmed and fructified by it, and all forms of life, whether vegetable or animal, are due to its influence. Without it, this earth would be a wandering ball, enveloped in the most intense cold—eternal death, perpetual winter, endless gloom —a dawnless night, without a scintilla of light, a particle of life, and but little motion; unless it strayed away into some other solar system and became warmed and enlightened by the rays of its sun. All can realize that we are greatly indebted to the sun, but it is still difficult to fully comprehend the magnitude of this indebtedness. The sum total of life that exists upon this planet is immense; the myriads of forms of life in the vegetable and animal kingdom on the surface of the earth, in the ocean, in the air, the millions of forms of life, seen and unseen, from the microscopic, infinitesimal monad whose brief life lasts but thirty minutes, to the elephant and the whale whose existence continues over a century, all, all derive their life, their vigor, their activity, their muscular strength, their sentient powers, al.

their happiness and all their capacity to enjoy happiness, directly from the sun and its influence. If this sphere we inhabit has a God—a supreme power—it must be the sun. What else can it be? From what source do we derive any of the benefits we enjoy, save from the genial influence of the sun, operating upon the elements and properties which exist upon, and around this planet?

What then is the sun? A vast body of matter in a state of fusion, throwing off immense quantities of substance in the form of light and heat, and constantly being fed and compensated by an infinitude of meteors, aerolites and small bodies of matter eternally aggregating and floating in space. It is not a sentient power. It does not think nor reason, though it dispenses those qualities and elements which constitute us sentient, thinking beings. How truly Beecher exclaims: "What we think of the sun, the sun don't care about." It is wholly out of our power to do aught to aid or injure him. If his rays are too direct and powerful in portions of the earth; if he scorches and burns us, we may hang up a blanket to prevent his rays striking a given point, or we may erect other similar means to make a shade, but what can we do to effect the sun, favorably or unfavorably? And what does it care for our oblations, our adorations, our actions or our thoughts? Absolutely nothing. Vain it is for us to prostrate ourselves on the earth before him; vain it is to tender incense and worship to his glorious appearance; vain it is to call upon him for aid, or mercy or any special dispensation of goodness. We cannot make him hear. Our cries cannot reach him. We may bask in his rays; we may enjoy the genial influence which he con-

stantly imparts; we may be wise or unwise in improving the opportunities that we enjoy; we may gather or scatter the blessings with which we are surrounded; we may be presumptuous enough to think we can guide the glorious orb; we may vainly think to instruct him as to his course, and as to the beneficence he ought to dispense here or there; we may seek to do him good by our puny powers; we may think his rays at times are too burning, at other times may think he hides himself in obscurity; we may seek to hasten him on his journey, or to induce him to tarry but for an hour, but what does it all amount to? and what cares the sun for aught we can say, do or think? Nothing. But he cares just as much as any Deity that exists. Whoever Deity is, whatever he is, and wherever he is, he is not offended at our thoughts, our words nor our actions. If there is a Deity, he must be *infinite*—as boundless as the Universe—he must fill immensity. If he fills immensity, there cannot be room for aught else; and then what fills all space is God. We call it the Universe, and it seems a fitting name. God is only another name for the Universe, and as a superstitious idea of a limited person—a local being, is connected with the term, it seems a less appropriate name by which to designate the infinite—the *supreme*—the ALL, than the Universe.

One truth must be admitted to be axiomatic, and that is, that every particle of matter, every force, every incentive to life and motion that are in the Universe, belong to it and are parts of it. There is no matter, power or principle extraneous to it. The Universe is a unit and all the God there is, or can be, is the Universe. The Universe is not only infinite, but it is eternal—without beginning of existence or

end days. Not a grain of matter that helps to constitute it is creatable nor destructible. Not all the chemists and scientists in the world are able to add a grain to the weight of the earth, nor to abstract a grain from it. The component parts of the Universe are constantly evolving and changing, and may pass through millions of forms ; but their existence cannot be destroyed.

We dissent entirely from the theory that matter is in itself dead or inert, and cannot move or act until operated upon by a force extraneous to it. On the contrary, matter inherently possesses all the force, power and motion that exists, and every particle of matter possesses this power or force. Dead matter, or inertia, is an absurdity ; matter is ever living and the source of all life, power and motion. Force and motion are increased as the magnitude of bodies is increased, other conditions being the same. All bodies have motion ; nothing in the Universe stands still ; everywhere are motion, activity, life. Prof. Proctor assumes that every sun, every world, every planet, has motion in proportion to its size ; that the motion of the earth is seven miles per second, Jupiter forty miles per second, while the sun has three hundred and fifty miles per second ; thus, the larger the body of matter, the greater its motion, power and force. We must never lose sight of the great fact that all force and all motion pertain to matter, and have no existence disconnected with it.

Whatever then, we repeat, the infinite is, whether we denominate it Universe, Cosmos, Universal Matter, Protoplasm or God, we may safely conclude that it does not stop to trouble itself about the thoughts or actions of insects, fishes, reptiles, birds, quadrupeds,

nor human beings. It is all a mistake, that it becomes angry at men for living and acting out their natures, and that it becomes vindictive and unforgiving, and that this anger and enmity is exhibited chiefly after death, and does not become satisfied through the endless ages of eternity. It is the priests, as we have said, who have been the authors of this abominable doctrine. It is they who have planted and nurtured these harrowing fears. Though they admit God to be kind, beneficient and forbearing in this life, they take great pains to make us believe that when we have passed the portals of death he becomes changed towards us, and that though while here he is loving and slow to anger, he there becomes terribly relentless and cruel. There is not the slightest reason upon which to found an opinion that the Supreme Power changes in the least degree in his character and disposition towards the animated portions of the Universe. He is the same in all states and stages of existence. If there is a future state where humanity has a continued existence, the Infinite will be the same there as here —the same in the future state as in the present. He does not punish here and he will not punish there. We have often said, God is no more to be feared in passing from the present state of existence into the future state, than in passing from New York into the State of Pennsylvania. His character is the same in all states alike. He is not vindictive ; he does not punish in anger and without cessation here nor hereafter.

We said, the Materialist and the Spiritualist are agreed as to the fear of death and what succeeds it. The first recognizes the fact that human beings come into existence by the same natural process by which

all forms of life are propagated and continued. He sees that individul life arises from organization and believes it must discontinue when the organization terminates. He believes in no future state of individual intellect and life. When we pass from this form of existence, our individuality ceases ; the particles of matter of which we are composed return to the condition from which they were evolved, and we go back to the state of unconsciousness we occupied previous to our individual existence. He sees nothing terrible in this. As he does not mourn because he had no individual existence before his birth, he does not mourn because he has none after his death. It must be admitted that this view is infinity better than the Christian belief in an eternity of suffering and unhappiness, without object or benefit.

The Spiritualist believes that the human race, and perhaps all animated existences, have a dual life ; that this primitive or rudimental state is succeeded by a more protracted and more ethereal existence. That during our rudimental life we perfect or develop a finer and more subtle organization of matter in a superior form, and that this sublimated body continues to live, to think and act after the coarser body has passed through the change called death, and has ceased to exist. The second body or organization they believe to be just as real, just as material as the first form, but more refined and ethereal, bearing the same relation, perhaps, to the rudimental existence that the perfume or the ottar of roses bears to the rough, thorny rose-bush. That in all forms of life there are both primary and ultimate conditions ; each being the result of organization ; each being alike sustained by nourishment and assimilation, and

each being perfect in functional development. For this reason it is believed we continue to think and act as individuals, after we pass from the rudimental condition.

Upon the question of a future life—a continuation of individual organizations, the world is greatly divided. Powerful intellects have been arrayed on either side, and all available arguments, pro and con, have been used again and again. A preponderance of mankind has, doubtless, inclined to a belief in a future life, although they have not agreed as to the means by which it is obtained. Some have regarded it as a natural result of our earth-life—a corollary of our mundane existence. Others believe the future life or immortality, a special gift from God or his Son, and that it comes from believing a prescribed set of dogmas—faith in a certain creed. It cannot appear reasonable to a thinking mind, that a future existence depends upon any set of opinions, nor that it is a partial favor granted to a portion, only, of human beings, and denied to the remainder. If it is a *truth*, it exists in keeping with the immutable laws of the Universe, and is general in its character; the same with all nationalities, colors and creeds, and including, perhaps, the lower orders of animal life.

After some years of doubt we have been led to give our adhesions to a belief in a continued existence. This belief has been induced by the proofs we have witnessed, the manifestations of intelligence unconnected with visible physical organizations, and which have been brought to our cognizance through the agency of what are called, spirit-phenomena. Recognizing the fact that much that has been palmed off as this class of phenomena has been fraudulent and un-

worthy of attention, it cannot be successfully denied that under proper conditions certain phenomena do take place which cannot be relegated to the domain of deception. The cry of "fraud" will not suffice to meet the actual results that take place in the direction indicated. A force is made apparent, an intelligence is demonstrated, that for want of a better theory, is attributed to invisible existences, possessing organs of thought and action similar to ourselves. When the laws of the Universe, which are still greatly unknown to us, are brought to our knowledge and comprehension, we may be able to assign other causes than spirit-existence for the phenomena that take place; but until this time comes, the Spiritualistic theory seems the more probable, and covers more of the *facts* than any other hypothesis that has been advanced.

Knowing of no intelligence, save that which is the result of organization adapted to its production, and finding convincing proof of an intelligence coming from invisible sources, it is an easy step to arrive at the conclusion that there does exist, finer, ethereal, sublimated individualities possessing organs, parts and functions, though not obvious to our rudimental visual organs. This step we perhaps have taken. It is easy to comprehend that a large portion of matter in an aeriform and attenuated state exists in a condition not appreciable by our organs of sight; and scientists tell us that all the rocks, minerals, oxides and fluids forming this earth, are susceptible of being transformed into gases, invisible to the human eye, and that in the long ago they once occupied that invisible, impalpable condition.

In the multifarious forms and evolutions through

which matter has passed, worlds, systems and constellations have been formed; and on our own globe we perceive that soils have been produced, and with the influence of the sun, vegetable, animal and sentient life are the product. These results are most wonderful, but they impart not to us the sum total of the capabilities of matter. Every day new facts are revealed to us, and year after year new revelations are made, that but a few years earlier would have been pronounced impossible.

If three-fourths of a century ago a prediction had been made that in fifty years the oceans and every principal river of the earth would have been navigated by splendid floating palaces, driven by an unknown power at the rate of fifteen to twenty miles an hour, and that by the same force long trains of heavy carriages, carrying fifty tons of freight or one hundred human beings each, would be rapidly transported across plains and valleys, through forests, over and through mountains, under and over rivers at the rate of thirty miles an hour; would such a prediction have then gained credence? Now we can believe it easily.

If fifty years ago it had been said that within a few years, by aid of the sun's rays and a few chemicals, accurate pictures of persons, objects and landscapes could be almost instantaneously cast upon paper, metal and ivory, who would have believed it? Now we admit it without a question.

If forty years ago it had been asserted that in three decades the thoughts and intelligence of man could be conveyed three thousand miles in a second of time, and that the same could be sent thousands of miles from continent to continent under the ocean, would

it have been believed? Now this is being done every hour.

If a quarter of a century ago we had been assured that, by the aid of the spectroscope, the chemical constituency of the sun, the planets, comets, fixed stars and the distant nebulæ could be determined, would we have readily believed it? Now we accept it as true. Thus we see one stage of development after another in the domain of matter is constantly being brought to our consciousness. If it proves to be a truth that we, as organized beings have a continued existence; that we perfect while in this stage a finer and less destructable organization, that lives, and acts, and thinks for thousands of years, it is perhaps no more strange nor wonderful that the various phenomena of life and material evolution which we already partially comprehend. As we remarked, we know not yet but little of the capabilities and possibilities of matter, we know but little of the law of psychology, and when we know more, perhaps a continued existence after death will appear quite possible and reasonable. It is certainly desirable that our existence should be as pleasant and as long as possible. It is well calculated to exalt our views and estimates of the Universe if we find a continued existence after death is among its wonderful provisions and possibilities. As choice and wish, however, can have no part in determining the question, we have to look only to the palpable and actual facts that may be presented to our comprehension.

Imbued with the conviction that MATTER with its inherent forces is all that is—that it does all that is done, we cannot agree with those who claim that matter is only the result of spirit—that spirit is the

substance, and matter the shadow. We dissent entirely from the philosophy which claims that spirit is everything, and matter nothing. On the other hand, matter is the *summa summarum* of all existences. Whatever is not matter is nothing. If spirit is anything, it is a form of matter; matter is not a product of spirit, but spirit a product of matter and in a high form of evolution which matter is capable of attaining. If this is so; if spirit existences are material organizations, it is not difficult to comprehend a continued individual life; but not an *immortal* existence. By immortality we understand a never-ending existence. It is a logical conclusion that that which has no end could have had no beginning. It is an axiomatic truth, that what has a beginning must have an end. As it is very evident, that as individuals, we all had a beginning but a few decades ago, (despite the untenable theory of the incarnationists, who hold that we are eternal as individual entities and never had a beginning) the only logical deduction that can be arrived at, is, that at some period of time our individual existence must terminate, when the elementary molecules of which we are composed must revert back to the great fountain of the Universe whence they came. How long this individual, conscious existence may continue, we know not; possibly thousands of years. If, however, in the wonderful provisions and capabilities of the Universe, individual immortality is among the possibilities, let us duly appreciate the future that awaits us. Of all this, however, we shall know more, or know less, when, in the language of our Spiritualistic friends, we "leave the physical plane" and "cross the shining river."

As much, however, of all this theory of the future

life is beyond the ken of our vision; as much of it is mere speculation, let us not waste our time and energies in a fruitless effort to look into the beyond. While we occupy this state of existence it is wise for us to give our whole attention to the duties, labors and objects of this life, and leave the imaginary conditions of a future life until we have finished with this, and are far more able to meet and discharge the duties of another. We find plenty here to employ all our talents, energies and abilities, and it is unwise in us to neglect them, and in preference, give our attention to that so far beyond our grasp and comprehension. Our services are needed here. All the efforts we are capable of accomplishing can be usefully employed here, and cannot be intelligently directed to conditions in the world beyond our sight and knowledge. Let us, then, while here, live for this world only, securing and increasing our own happiness in every conceivable and legitimate way, and in adding to the happiness of those around us, to the extent of our ability.

Happiness and usefulness should be the great objects of existence. These consist not in long-faced solemnity, unnatural gravity, hypocritical piety, nor in keeping up a warfare on the harmless pleasures of life; neither are they derived from the pursuit of passion, vanity and frivolity. Cheerfulness and health are two great requisites to happiness and usefulness. These are courted and won by a judicious course, or are dissipated and repulsed by an opposite course. The object of our lives should be to make this world as beautiful, and ourselves and our fellows as happy as is in our power. If we do this we need never have a fear of death, or of what is to come after it. Such a course

will make us happy here and will place us in a position to enter into the joys of another existence, if there is one.

At all events there is no cause why we should suffer our minds to harbor fears and terrors about the future, and the punishment and the sorrow which the reverend gentry would have us believe eternally exist there. Whether death terminates our existence or opens up to our vision a brighter and better life, let us dispel all fear of death ; all dismal misgivings, all superstitious dread, which is the inevitable necessity and counterpart of all that has life.

" Do you ask for Heaven? Seek it here; and Hell is where you make it."

We will close with the beautiful, impressive words of Ingersoll : " Reason, observation and experience—the Holy Trinity of science, have taught us that happiness is the only good; that the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so. This is enough for us. In this belief we are content to live and die. If, by any possibility, the existence of a power superior to, and independent of nature shall be demonstrated, there will then be time enough to kneel. Until then, let us stand erect."

Read THE TRUTH SEEKER; a live Journal devoted to Science, Morals, and Freethought. Price per year $2.00, for six months $1.00, for three months 50cts.

Circulate the TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS, containing from four to seventy-five pages each. Price. from one to ten cents each. Liberal discount by quantity.

D. M. BENNETT, 335 Broadway, N. Y.

Will You Take a Copy?

Now in press, and will be issued in the early part of 1876,

THE

"World's Sages, Infidels and Thinkers,"

Being the Biographies and important sayings of the most distinguished *Teachers, Philosophers, Reformers, Innovators, Founders of New Schools of Thought and Religion, Unbelievers in Current Theology, Scientists and Humanitarians* of the world, from the early age of MENU down through the following 3000 years to our own time.

A crown-octavo volume of over 800 pages.

By D. M. BENNETT, Editor of *The Truth Seeker*.

With a steel plate Engraving of the Author.

It is believed the work will fill a want long felt, and will add materially to the general information touching the characters treated, affording a succinct and correct account of the best and truest persons who have lived, and in a convenient and economical form.

The whole will be divided into four parts:

PART I

Will embrace Menu Zoroaster, Christna, Buddha, Confucius, Lycurgus, Anaximander, Epimenedes, Pythagoras, Solon, Xenophanes, Socrates, Plato, Diogenes, Epicurus, Zeno, Hypocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, and many others of the most prominent Grecian and Roman Sages down to the Christian era.

PART II

Will contain Jesus, Seneca, Celsus, Porphyry, Pliny, Antoninus, Plutarch, Epictetus, Galen, Hypatia, Julian the Apostate, Mahomet, Roger Bacon, Boccaccio, Bruno, Vanini, Copernicus, Galileo, Hobbes, Spinoza, Lord Bacon, Descartes, Hume, and many others, prior to, and in the eighteenth century.

PART III

Embraces later Freethinkers, Philosophers and Scientists down to our own time, some of whom are Helvetius, Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Goethe, Kant, Condorcet, Volney, D'Holbach, Richard Carlyle, Sir Wm. Hamilton, Combe, Paine, Jefferson, Humboldt, Mary Wollstonecraft, Shelley, Comte, Frances Wright, Harriet Martineau, Kneeland, Parker, Feuerbach, Lyell, Strauss, G. Vale, Buckle, J. Stuart Mill, and others who have recently died.

PART IV

Will comprise the living Scientists, Teachers, Liberalists, Advanced Thinkers, and promulgators of Free Thought, among whom are Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Helmholtz, Beuchner, Wallace, Crookes, Renan, Colenso, Draper, Fiske, Holyoke, Watts, Bradlaugh, Mendum, Seaver, R. D. Owen, S. P. Andrews, Frothingham, Abbot, A. J. Davis, Tuttle, Denton, Pike, Ellis, Ingersoll, Underwood, Peebles, and numerous others, composing the mental advance guard of the age.

The work will embrace some ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY of the characters to whom the world owes so much for the progress it has made in the evolution of thought, truth and reason.

An important feature will be to give the death-bed incidents of the characters treated, so far as possible, thus disproving the false assertions so often made, that Unbelievers and Infidels recant upon their death-beds.

The work will be printed on new type, good paper, and will be bound in good style. Price, by mail or otherwise, THREE DOLLARS.

☞ N. B. No money required until the work is ready to deliver; and after received, if it is not worth the price, and does not give satisfaction, and is returned in good order, the money will be refunded. Those wishing the work, will make application as below, that it may be known how large an edition to print.

Orders for the work will be taken by B. F. UNDERWOOD, or they may be sent to the Author and Publisher,

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, New York.

READER, WILL YOU ENCOURAGE THIS ENTERPRISE?

SOW THE GOOD SEED!!

Let Your Light Shine!!!

CIRCULATE TRUTHFUL DOCUMENTS! PASS AROUND THE TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS

and other Liberal publications to do missionary work and to help in opening THE EYES OF THE BLIND!

THE TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS

are furnished at prices very low, so that Societies and generous individuals can buy them for gratuitous distribution.

LARGE DISCOUNTS

to those who purchase by the quantity. [See Price List.]

Probably a few dollars can be expended for spreading TRUTH and LIGHT in no way so effectually as in dispensing broadcast

THE TRUTH SEEKER TRACTS.

Let Liberals exercise liberality enough to give away thousands and tens of thousands of these tracts. They are well designed to do missionary work and in spreading the glad tidings of truth. If a proper enthusiasm is enkindled in the breasts of the lovers of Free Thought and Mental Liberty, much good can be accomplished.

Prices range from one cent to ten. From one to one hundred may be ordered of any of the various numbers, and a heavy discount made to those who buy by the quantity.

Friends, invest $5 or $10 in this way, and see how much good it will do. We certainly ought to be as zealous in promulgating truths as our adversaries are in disseminating error.

Published by D. M. BENNETT,

335 Broadway N. Y.

Truth Seeker Tracts.

[REVISED LIST.]

No.		Cts.
1.	Discussion on Prayer, etc. D. M. Bennett and two Clergymen.	8
2.	Oration on the Gods. R. G. Ingersoll.	10
3.	Thomas Paine. R. G. Ingersoll.	5
4.	Arraingment of the Church, or Individuality. By R. G. Ingersoll.	5
5.	Heretics and Heresies. R. G. Ingersoll.	5
6.	Humboldt. R. G. Ingersoll.	5
7.	The Story of Creation. D. M. Bennett.	5
8	The Old Snake Story. "	2
9	The story of the Flood. "	5
10	The Plagues of Egypt. "	2
11	Korah, Datham, and Abiram. D. M. Bennett.	1
12	Balaam and his Ass. D. M. Bennett.	2
13	Arraignment of Priestcraft. D. M. Bennett.	8
14	Old Abe and Little Ike. John Syphers.	3
15	Come to Dinner. "	2
16	Fog Horn Documents. "	2
17	The Devil Still Ahead. "	2
18	Slipped up Again. "	2
19.	Joshua Stopping the Sun and Moon. D. M. Bennett.	2
20	Samson and his Exploits. D. M. Bennett.	2
21.	The Great Wrestling Match. "	2
22.	Discussion with Elder Shelton. "	10
23.	Reply to Elder Shelton's Fourth Letter. D. M. Bennett.	3
24.	Christians at Work. Wm. McDonnell.	5
25.	Discussion with Geo. Snode. D. M. Bennett.	3
26.	Underwood's Prayer.	1
27.	Honest Question and Honest Answers. Bennett.	5
28.	Alessandro di Cagliostro. Chas. Sotheran.	10
29.	Paine Hall Dedication Address. B. F. Underwood.	5
30.	Woman's Rights and Man's Wrongs. John Syphers.	2
31.	Gods and God-houses. John Syphers.	2
32.	The Gods of Superstition and the God of the Universe. D. M. Bennett.	8
33.	What has Christianity Done? S. H. Preston.	2
34.	Tribute to Thomas Paine. S. H. Preston.	2
35.	Moving the Ark. D. M. Bennett.	2
36.	Bennett's Prayer to the Devil.	2
37.	A Short Sermon. No. 1. Rev. Theologicus, D.D.	2
38.	Christianity not a Moral System. X. Y. Z.	2
39.	The True Saint. S. P. Putnam.	1
40.	The Bible of Nature *vs.* The Bible of Men. Syphers.	2
41.	Our Ecclesiastical Gentry. D. M. Bennett.	1
42.	Elijah the Tishbite. D. M. Bennett.	4
43.	Christianity a Borrowed System. D. M. Bennett.	3
44.	Design Argument Refuted, B. F. Underwood.	3
45.	Elisha the Prophet. D. M. Bennett.	2
46.	Did Jesus Really Exist? D. M. Bennett.	3

47. Cruelty and Credulity of the Human Race. Dr. Daniel Arter. 3
48. Freethought in the West. G. L. Henderson. 5
49. Sensible Conclusions. E. E. Guild. 5
50. Jonah and the Big Fish D. M. Bennett. 3
51. Sixteen Truth Seeker Leaflets, No. 1 5
52. Marples-Underwood Debate. B. F. Underwood. 3
53. Questions for Bible Worshipers. B. F. Underwood. 2
54. An Open Letter to Jesus Christ. D. M. Bennett. 5
55. Bible God Disproved by Nature. W. E. Coleman. 3
56. Bible Contradictions. 1
57. Jesus Not a Perfect Character. B. F. Underwood. 2
58. Prophecies. B. F. Underwood. 2
59. Bible Prophecies Concerning Babylon. Underwood. 2
60. Ezekiel's Prophecies Concerning Tyre. Underwood. 2
61. History of the Devil. Isaac Paden. 5
62. The Jews and their God. Isaac Paden. 10
63. The Devil's Due-Bills. John Syphers. 3
64. The Ills we endure—their Cause and Cure. Bennett. 5
65. Short Sermon No. 2. Rev. Theologicus, D.D. 2
66. God Idea in History. Hugh Byron Brown. 5
67. Sixteen Truth Seeker Leaflets, No. 2. 5
68. Ruth's Idea of Heaven and Mine. Susan H. Wixon. 2
69. Missionaries, Mrs. E. D. Slenker. 2
70. Vicarious Atonement, Dr. J. S. Lyon. 3
71. Paine's Anniversary. C. A. Codman. 3
72. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. D. M. Bennett. 2
73. Foundations. John Syphers. 3
74. Daniel in the Lions' Den. D. M. Bennett. 2
75 An Hour with the Devil. D. M. Bennett. 10

Scientific Series.

1. Hereditary Transmission. Prof. Louis Elsberg, M.D. 5
2. Evolution; from the Homogeneous to the Heterogeneous. B. F. Underwood. 3
3. Darwinism. B. F. Underwood. 3
4. Literature of the Insane. Frederic R. Marvin, M.D. 5
5. Responsibility of Sex. Mrs. Sara B. Chase, M.D. 3
6. Graduated Atmospheres. James McCarroll. 2
7. Death. Frederic R. Marvin, M.D. 5

Discount on $1 worth, 10 per cent.; on $2 worth, 20 per cent.; on $3 worth, 25 per cent.; on $5 worth, 40 per cent.; on $10 worth, 50 per cent. Postage paid, by mail.

The foregoing Tracts, with a number of others not yet listed, will be issued early in 1876, in THREE VOLUMES, of 500 pages each, at the extremely low price of 60 cents in paper, and $1.00 in cloth, or $1.50 for the three volumes in paper, or $2.50 for the three volumes in cloth. Cheaper and better reading matter on a wide variety of subjects, and by different authors, can nowhere be obtained.

D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

JUST ISSUED!

THE

BURGESS-UNDERWOOD

DEBATE.

COMMENCING JUNE. 29th, 1875,

AT AYLMER, ONTARIO,

AND CONTINUING FOUR DAYS.

BETWEEN

PROF. O. A. BURGESS,

PRES'T N. W. CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, INDIANAPOLIS. IND.,

AND

B. F. UNDERWOOD,

OF BOSTON, MASS.

REPORTED BY JOHN T. HAWKE.

FIRST PROPOSITION.—The Christian Religion, as set forth in the New Testament, is true in fact and of divine origin. Burgess in affirmative; Underwood in negative.

SECOND PROPOSITION.—The Bible is erroneous in many of its teachings regarding science and morals, and is of human origin. Underwood in affirmative; Burgess in negative.

Every person who likes to hear both sides of a question, and to be apprised of what can be said by each disputant, should avail themselves of the opportunity of procuring his valuable work.

PRESS NOTICE:

An Aylmer paper of July 9th, 1875, contained the following: "The advocate of Christianity, PRES'T BURGESS, of the Northwestern University, Indianapolis, is everthing he has been represented to be. An eloquent speaker, whose words escape from his mouth, clothed with a living earnestness which cannot fail to find a responsive echo in the heart of every Christian.

"B. F. UNDERWOOD, of Boston, makes more impression on the thinkers by his facts, authorities and theories, and when those need more forcible expression, is not inferior to BURGESS as an orator. The difference between him and BURGESS in that respect, is, that the latter is almost at all times eloquent, and generally appealing to the sympathies of his audience; whilst MR. UNDERWOOD does dot rely on the momentary influence of language, but advances idea after idea, fact after fact, theory after theory, with such startling rapidity, that only the most highly cultivated mind and the most profound thinker can grasp them."

12 mo. 180 pp. In paper 60 cts.; cloth, $1. Postpaid.

D. M. BENNETT, 335 Broadway, N. Y.

THE HEATHENS OF THE HEATH,

BY WM. McDONNELL,

Author of "Exeter Hall," etc., etc.

This Work is rich in romantic and pathetic incidents. It exhibits, with an overwhelming array of facts, the

Terrible Atrocities

committed by the Church. It shows that the purest morality exists without the Bible, and that many of the heathen philosophers were "Lovers of Virtue."

Shocking instances are given of the depravity of Christian ministers, and of the prevailing immorality among Christian people.

The folly of "Foreign Missions" is fully portrayed. Hypocrisy and bigotry are clearly exposed, and the road to virtue and happiness plainly marked out.

A most pleasing Romance is woven into the work in which much chance is afforded for fine descriptions and beautiful sentiments, which the author well knows how to give utterance to.

"On the whole it is the work of a master hand—a work of unaffected beauty and the deepest interest.

"One of the most valuable features of the work is that its positions are all proved. Every thinking, enquiring mind should peruse it."

PRICE, in paper, - - - - - - - - - $1 00.
" in cloth, - - - - - - - - - - 1 50.

Sent postpaid on receipt of price.

D. M. BENNETT, Publisher.
335 Broadway, N. Y.

"EXETER HALL."

BY WM. McDONNELL.

Author of "The Heathens of the Heath," etc.

A beautiful, tender, delicate, pathetic and most convincing composition. A beautiful exhibit of the many mischievous effects growing out of religious dogmas founded upon the inspiration and divine authority of the Bible. It strongly denies the divine character claimed for that work by its mistaken devotees, and shows up in vivid colors the practical effects of superstition and religious fanaticism.

"Altogether it is the most searching book ever published in America since the "Age of Reason."

Price, in paper, 60 cents; in cloth, 80 cents. Sent postpaid, by mail. Address D. M. BENNETT,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

Innocent Amusement for the Young.

BLAKEMAN'S
Two Hundred Poetical Riddles.

These Riddles embrace a large variety of subjects, and will be found very entertaining to children, as well as to those of larger growth.

They will assist materially in affording amusement to social parties, as well as to the fire-side family circle.

Price, 20 cents by mail.

D. M. BENNETT, *Publisher*,
335 Broadway, N. Y.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Feb. 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

THE HECKMAN BINDERY INC
BOUND TO PLEASE
OCT 69
N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 013 774 160 A